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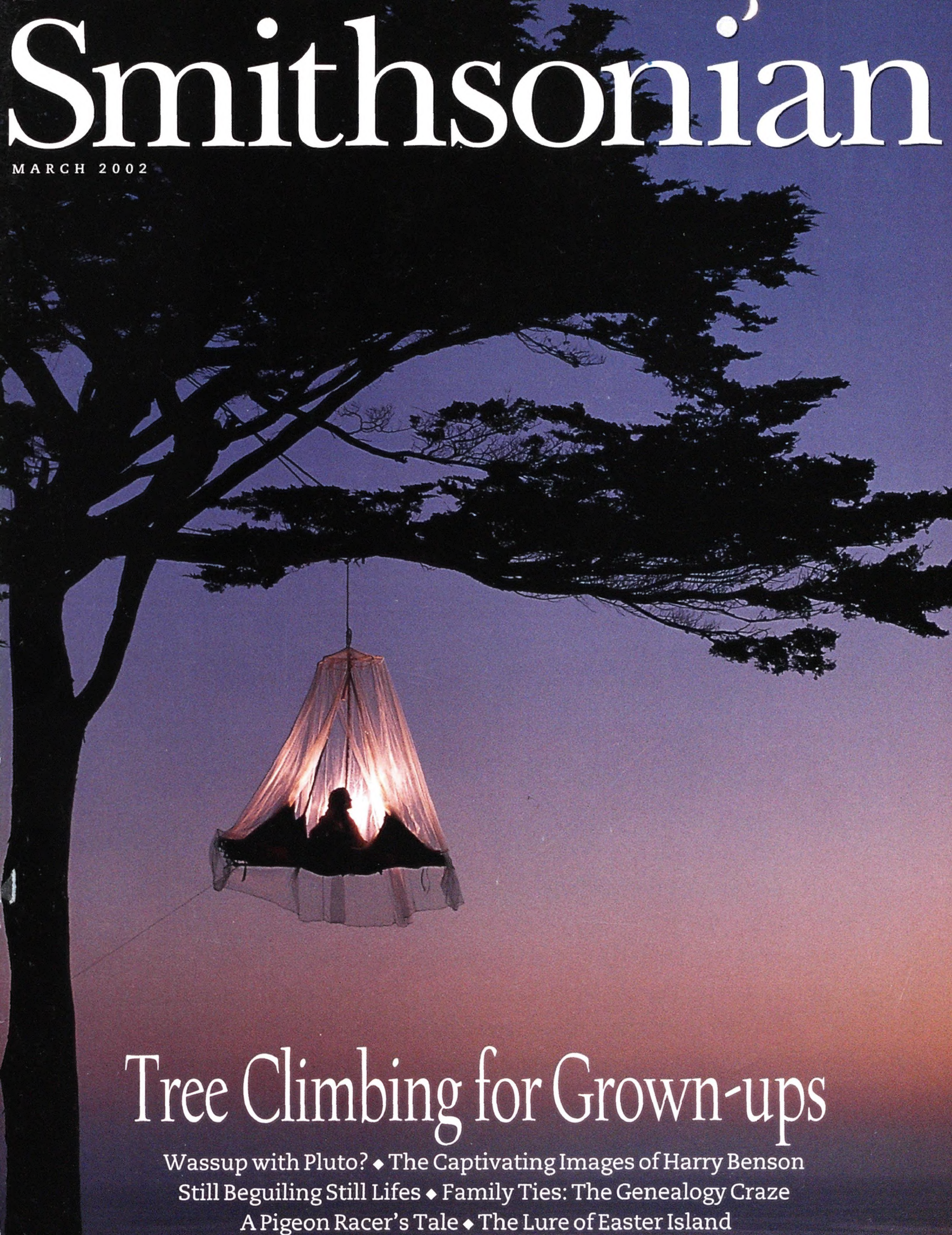

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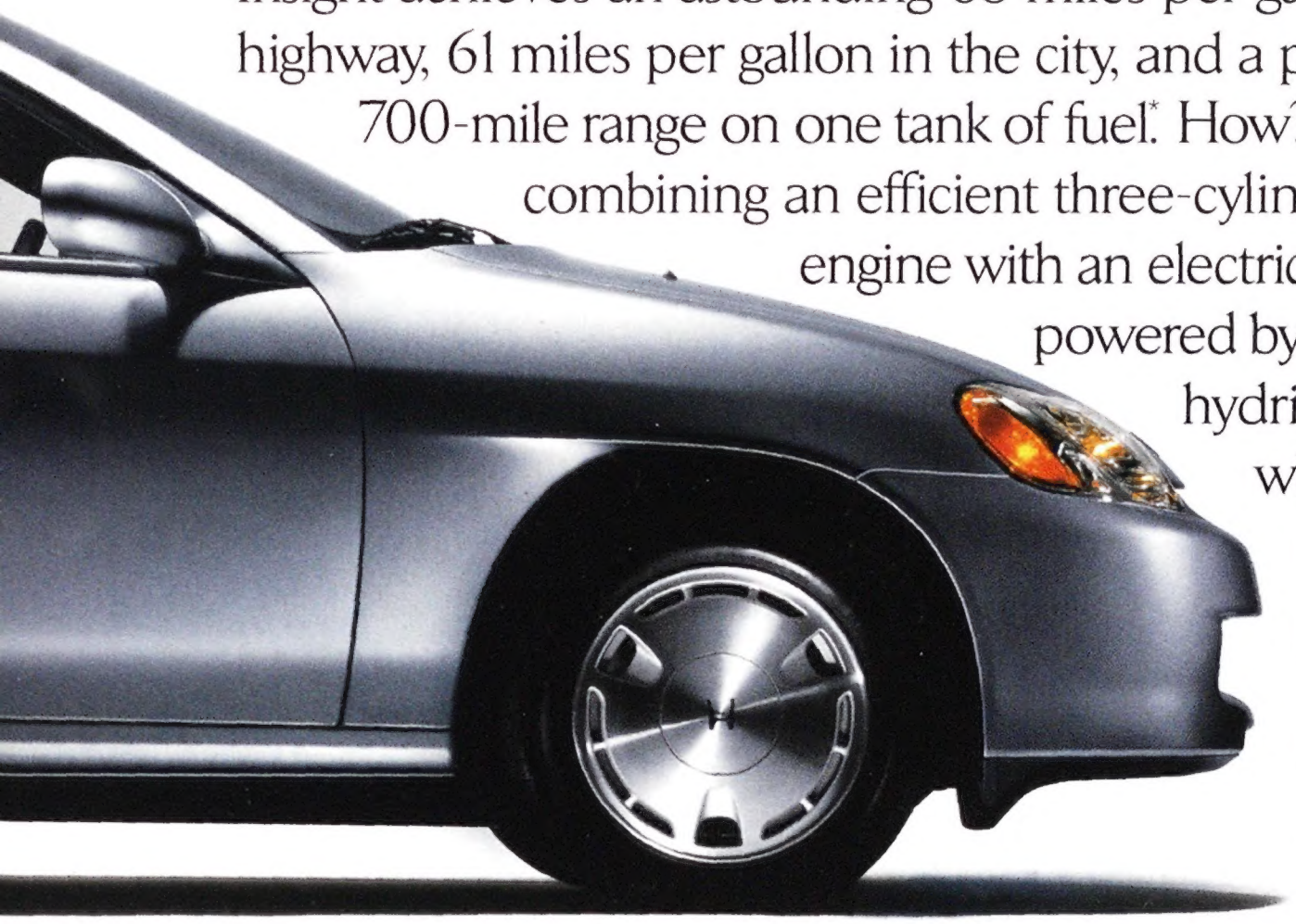

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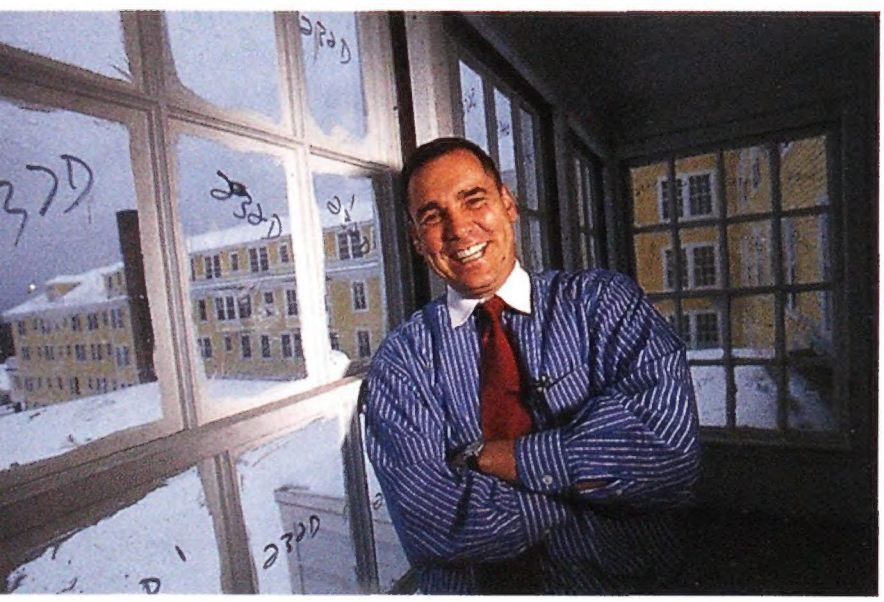

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ON THE COVER: A sleepover in a Monterey cypress near Elk, California. Cover photograph by Louie Psihoyos/Matrix International.

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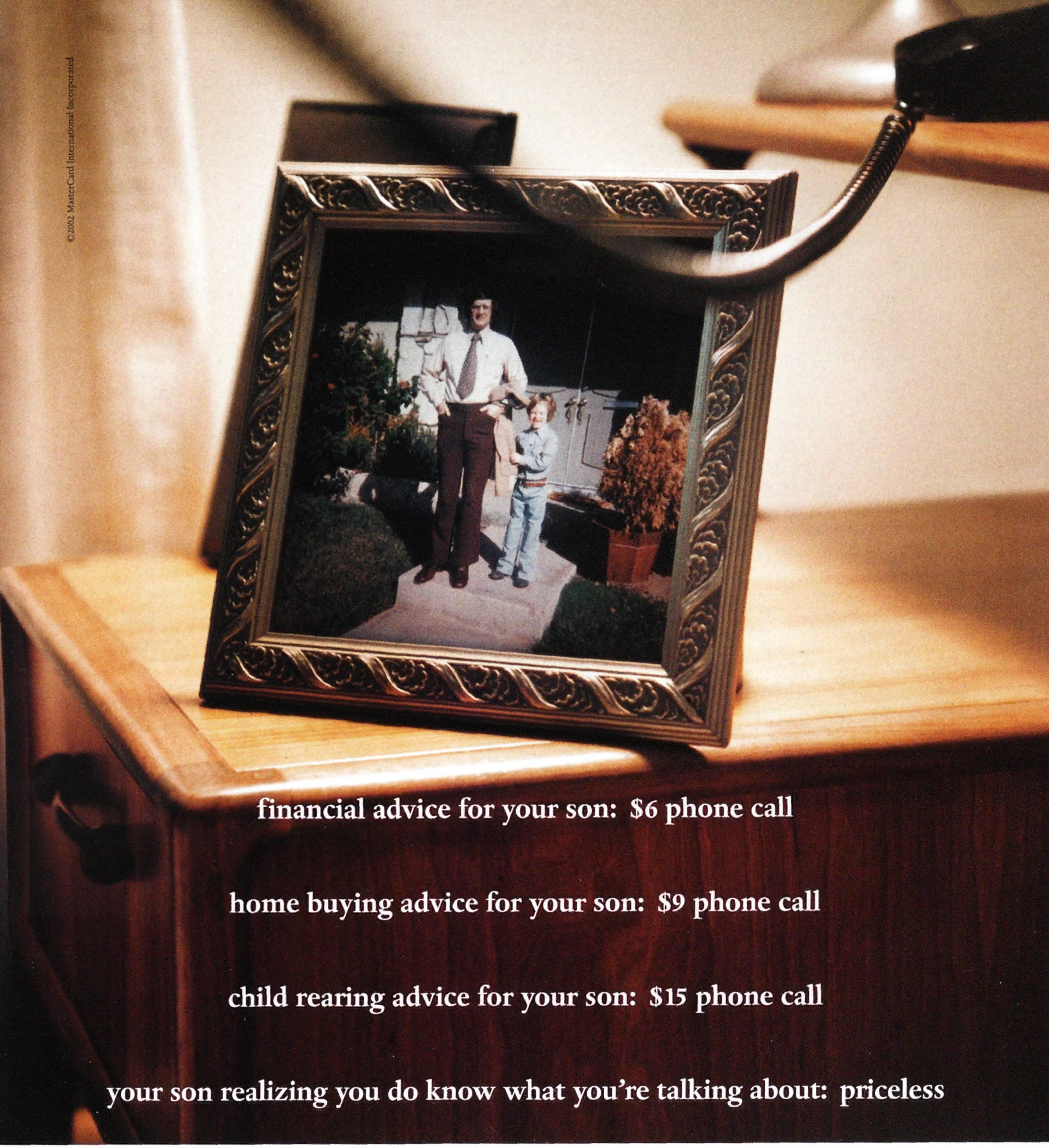
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From top: Claude Monet's *Still Life With Melon*, 1872; Fred Astaire and wife, Robyn Smith, photographed by Harry Benson, Los Angeles, 1981; Omayra Reyes with a blue-cheque hen; an Easter Island *moai*.

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BEHIND THE LINES

Pencil Pusher

TAKING NOTES OR SKETCHING, PAUL TRACHTMAN GETS THE LEAD OUT

BY CAREY WINFREY, EDITOR

LONGTIME CONTRIBUTOR AND FORMER SMITHSONIAN editor Paul Trachtman is on a roll. In November he wrote about sculptor Alberto Giacometti. In January it was Louis Pasteur and the germ theory of disease. And in this issue he travels to Easter Island for a fresh look at that utterly fascinating dot in the ocean ("Mysterious Island," p. 90). But Trachtman is not just an editor, reporter and writer. He is also an artist, whose work is in the permanent collection of the State Capitol in Santa Fe, New Mexico. (He has lived in the Tierra Amarilla Valley in northern New Mexico for the past 12 years.) During the two weeks he spent on Easter Island, Trachtman even found time to sketch the great heads known as *moai*. "I'd walked around them with local artists as guides, talked to archaeologists about their design and meaning, and made some photographs of them," he reports. "But it was contemplating these giants with a pencil or brush in hand that made them come to life for me. That's when I really saw the genius of the artists who carved them. The lines are abstract, simple and even 'primitive,' but the expressions are as full of complexity as any Cubist portrait by Picasso."

Trachtman (top, and *moai* watercolor, above): as complex as a portrait by Picasso.

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WARNINGS

Muscle: Tell your doctor right away if you experience any unexplained muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness at any time during treatment with ZOCOR so your doctor can decide if ZOCOR should be stopped. Some patients may have muscle pain or weakness while taking ZOCOR. Rarely, this can include muscle breakdown resulting in kidney damage. The risk of muscle breakdown is greater in patients taking certain other drugs along with ZOCOR, such as the lipid-lowering drug Lopid (gemfibrozil), and other fibrates; lipid-lowering doses of niacin (nicotinic acid); Sandimmune (cyclosporine); itraconazole, ketoconazole, and other azole antifungal drugs; the antibiotics erythromycin and clarithromycin; HIV protease inhibitors; the antidepressant nefazodone; and the calcium channel blocker verapamil. Interruption of therapy with ZOCOR should be considered if you are going to take an azole antifungal medication, such as itraconazole, or macrolide antibiotics, such as erythromycin. Avoid drinking large quantities of grapefruit juice (more than one quart daily) while on ZOCOR. The risk of muscle breakdown is greater in patients with kidney problems or diabetes.

Because there are risks in combining therapy with ZOCOR with the products listed above, your doctor should carefully weigh the potential benefits and risks. He or she should also carefully monitor patients for any muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness, particularly during the initial months of therapy and if the dose of either drug is increased. Your doctor also may monitor the level of certain muscle enzymes in your body, but there is no assurance that such monitoring will prevent the occurrence of severe muscle disease.

If you have conditions that can increase your risk of muscle breakdown, which in turn can cause kidney damage, your doctor should temporarily withhold or stop ZOCOR. Also, since there are no known adverse consequences of briefly stopping therapy with ZOCOR, treatment should be stopped a few days before elective major surgery and when any major acute medical or surgical condition occurs. Discuss this with your doctor, who can explain these conditions to you.

Liver: About 1% of patients who took ZOCOR in clinical trials developed elevated levels of some liver enzymes. Patients who had these increases usually had no symptoms. Elevated liver enzymes usually returned to normal levels when therapy with ZOCOR was stopped.

In the ZOCOR Survival Study, the number of patients with more than one liver enzyme level elevation to greater than 3 times the normal upper limit was no different between the ZOCOR and placebo groups. Only 8 patients on ZOCOR and 5 on placebo discontinued therapy due to elevated liver enzyme levels. Patients were started on 20 mg of ZOCOR, and one third had their dose raised to 40 mg.

Your doctor should perform routine blood tests to check these enzymes before you start treatment with ZOCOR and periodically thereafter (for example, semiannually) for your first year of treatment or until 1 year after your last elevation in dose. Patients titrated to the 80-mg dose should receive an additional test at 3 months. If your enzyme levels increase, your doctor should order more frequent tests. If your liver enzyme levels remain unusually high, your doctor should discontinue your medication.

Tell your doctor about any liver disease you may have had in the past and about how much alcohol you consume. ZOCOR should be used with caution in patients who consume large amounts of alcohol.

PRECAUTIONS

Before starting treatment with ZOCOR, try to lower your cholesterol by other methods such as diet, exercise, and weight loss. Ask your doctor about how best to do this. Any other medical problems that can cause high cholesterol should also be treated.

Drug Interactions: Because of possible serious drug interactions, it is important to tell your doctor what other drugs you are taking, including those obtained without a prescription.

ZOCOR® (simvastatin) can interact with cyclosporine (Sandimmune), itraconazole, ketoconazole, gemfibrozil, niacin, erythromycin, clarithromycin, HIV protease inhibitors, nefazodone, and verapamil.

To avoid possible serious side effects, avoid drinking large quantities of grapefruit juice (more than one quart daily) while on ZOCOR. (See WARNINGS, Muscle.)

Some patients taking lipid-lowering agents similar to ZOCOR and coumarin anticoagulants (a type of blood thinner) have experienced bleeding and/or increased blood clotting time. Patients taking these medicines should have their blood tested before starting therapy with ZOCOR and should continue to be monitored.

Central Nervous System Toxicity; Cancer, Mutations, Impairment of Fertility: Like most prescription drugs, ZOCOR was required to be tested on animals before it was marketed for human use. Often these tests were designed to achieve higher drug concentrations than humans achieve at recommended dosing. In some tests, the animals had damage to the nerves in the central nervous system. In studies of mice with high doses of ZOCOR, the likelihood of certain types of cancerous tumors increased. No evidence of mutations of or damage to genetic material has been seen. In one study with ZOCOR, there was decreased fertility in male rats.

Pregnancy: Pregnant women should not take ZOCOR because it may harm the fetus.

Safety in pregnancy has not been established. In studies with lipid-lowering agents similar to ZOCOR there have been rare reports of birth defects of the skeleton and digestive system. Therefore, women of childbearing age should not take ZOCOR unless it is highly unlikely they will become pregnant. If a woman does become pregnant while taking ZOCOR, she should stop taking the drug and talk to her doctor at once. The active ingredient of ZOCOR did not cause birth defects in rats at 3 times the human dose or in rabbits at 3 times the human dose.

Nursing Mothers: Drugs taken by nursing mothers may be present in their breast milk. Because of the potential for serious adverse reactions in nursing infants, a woman taking ZOCOR should not breast-feed. (See WHEN ZOCOR SHOULD NOT BE USED.)

Pediatric Use: ZOCOR is not recommended for children or patients under 20 years of age.

Geriatric Use: Higher blood levels of active drug were seen in elderly patients (70-78 years of age) compared with younger patients (18-30 years of age) in one study. In other studies, the cholesterol-lowering effects of ZOCOR were at least as great in elderly patients as in younger patients, and there were no overall differences in safety between elderly and younger patients over the 20-80 mg dosage range.

SIDE EFFECTS

Most patients tolerate treatment with ZOCOR well; however, like all prescription drugs, ZOCOR can cause side effects, and some of them can be serious. Side effects that do occur are usually mild and short-lived. Only your doctor can weigh the risks versus the benefits of any prescription drug. In clinical studies with ZOCOR, less than 1.5% of patients dropped out of the studies because of side effects. In a large, long-term study, patients taking ZOCOR experienced similar side effects to those patients taking placebo (sugar pills). Some of the side effects that have been reported with ZOCOR or related drugs are listed below. This list is not complete. Be sure to ask your doctor about side effects related to taking ZOCOR and to discuss any side effects that occur.

Digestive System: Constipation, diarrhea, upset stomach, gas, heartburn, stomach pain/cramps, anorexia, loss of appetite, nausea, inflammation of the pancreas, hepatitis, jaundice, fatty changes in the liver, and, rarely, severe liver damage and failure, cirrhosis, and liver cancer.

Muscle, Skeletal: Muscle cramps, aches, pain, and weakness; joint pain; muscle breakdown.

Nervous System: Dizziness, headache, insomnia, tingling, memory loss, damage to nerves causing weakness and/or loss of sensation and/or abnormal sensations, anxiety, depression, tremor, loss of balance, psychic disturbances.

Skin: Rash, itching, hair loss, dryness, nodules, discoloration.

Eye/Senses: Blurred vision, altered taste sensation, progression of cataracts, eye muscle weakness.

Hypersensitivity (Allergic) Reactions: On rare occasions, a wide variety of symptoms have been reported to occur either alone or together in groups (referred to as a syndrome) that appeared to be based on allergic-type reactions, which may rarely be fatal. These have included one or more of the following: a severe generalized reaction that may include shortness of breath, wheezing, digestive symptoms, and low blood pressure and even shock; an allergic reaction with swelling of the face, lips, tongue and/or throat with difficulty swallowing or breathing; symptoms mimicking lupus (a disorder in which a person's immune system may attack parts of his or her own body); severe muscle and blood vessel inflammation, sometimes including rash; bruises; various disorders of blood cells (that could result in anemia, infection, or blood clotting problems) or abnormal blood tests; inflamed or painful joints; hives; fatigue and weakness; sensitivity to sunlight; fever, chills; flushing; difficulty breathing; and severe skin disorders that vary from rash to a serious burn-like shedding of skin all over the body, including mucous membranes such as the lining of the mouth.

Other: Loss of sexual desire, breast enlargement, impotence.

Laboratory Tests: Liver function test abnormalities including elevated alkaline phosphatase and bilirubin; thyroid function abnormalities.

NOTE: This summary provides important information about ZOCOR. If you would like more information, ask your doctor or pharmacist to let you read the complete prescribing information and then discuss it with them.

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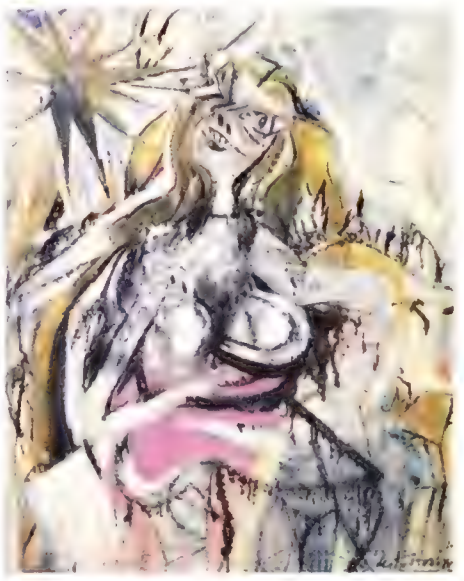
Dust-Free Art

FROM THE SECRETARY

IT'S NOT A COMMON ENOUGH INVITATION: "LET'S GO to the Smithsonian to see the de Koonings"—or the Bacons, Gorkys and Rodins, or any number of paintings and works of sculpture by 20th-century masters (Picasso, Giacometti, Lichtenstein, Hopper, Pollock, Brancusi, Mondrian, Matisse and more). The Smithsonian, after all, is the place with the dinosaurs and diamonds, locomotives and pandas, airplanes and Star-Spangled Banner. But the Institution is also home to works of international achievement in the visual arts. These masterpieces may go back centuries, or even millennia, and be celebrated in our Asian and African art museums, or they may be as thrillingly new as the work of a living artist, displayed, along with those de Koonings, Bacons and Gorkys, in the nation's museum of modern and contemporary art, the Hirshhorn.



Willem de Kooning's *Woman* (1948) shines at the Hirshhorn Museum.

The Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden opened in 1974, but its origins date from the previous decade, when S. Dillon Ripley, then the Secretary of the Institution, persuaded philanthropist Joseph H. Hirshhorn to make his personal collection of modern art the basis of a new Smithsonian museum. In 1966, Hirshhorn donated some 6,000 objects—paintings, sculptures, works on paper—and that remarkable gift was doubled by a magnanimous bequest at his death in 1981.

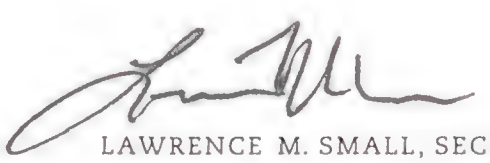
To house the collection, architect Gordon Bunshaft conceived an enormous cast concrete cylindrical drum of a building—a marvel of engineering and design for its time—hovering on four piers above a central open courtyard and plaza with a spectacular fountain at its core. An outdoor sculpture garden was created adjacent to the museum. But for its massive scale, the elegant building would look right at home as a piece of modern sculpture in the garden.

The Hirshhorn's collection today is richer and more comprehensive than ever, thanks to a judicious process of refinement and augmentation that was the particular accomplishment of its second director, James Demetrion. The museum is filled with objects that are beautiful and moving, playful and provocative, and a generous selection of them is always displayed in the third floor galleries—where, in a single orderly circuit of the building, visitors can experience something of the unruly course of art in the 20th century.

The Hirshhorn's exterior has the closed, no-nonsense perfection of a circle and seems to brook no argument. That's ironic, when so much of what's inside, around every graceful bend, does the opposite. Here is art that invites viewers to speak up, because they're excited, puzzled, dismayed, surprised by what they see. It is art on which the dust has not had time to settle (except, inevitably, in the garden). It may provoke a whole catalog of responses, but indifference won't be among them.

Jim Demetrion retired in 2001, after 17 years as the museum's director. His successor, Ned Rifkin, a highly regarded figure in the world of international contemporary art, began his tenure in January, having previously been director of the Menil Collection and Foundation in Houston and the High Museum of Art in Atlanta. Ned brings to the job the invaluable additional credential of having worked as the Hirshhorn's chief curator from 1986 to 1991. Knowing firsthand how much the museum's holdings have been enhanced over the past two decades, he'll be spreading the word and encouraging the public to come and see for themselves: "Visitors to the Hirshhorn will be surrounded by art that can add to their understanding of our own stimulating, complex times. This connection is exciting, and we want to provide the best possible experience to share that excitement."

A museum that attracts 900,000 visitors, as the Hirshhorn did in 2000—and that presents a portion of its holdings in an outdoor garden—can hardly be called a secret. But the Hirshhorn is one of our nation's great cultural resources, and its renown has not caught up to the quality and vitality of its collection. We're determined that it will.



LAWRENCE M. SMALL, SECRETARY

HIRSHHORN MUSEUM AND SCULPTURE GARDEN. GIFT OF JOSEPH H. HIRSHHORN FOUNDATION

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BULLISH on AMERICA

SILK ROBES AND CELL PHONES

FRANCES FITZGERALD DISPLAYS SUBTLE prejudices in her January 2002 article when she essentially dismisses southern Vietnam as inconsequential, although it has its own distinct culture and history. She also refers to "the American war." It would have been more accurate to refer to the war that took place in Vietnam in the 1960s and '70s as part of what FitzGerald herself called the "process of conquest and colonization that took them [the northern Vietnamese] south to the Gulf of Siam." We shouldn't let FitzGerald's beautiful writing distort the anthropological and historical record.

S. J. Deitchman
Chevy Chase, Maryland

AFGHANISTAN

THE LEAD PHOTOGRAPH FOR THE article "Marco Polo's Guide to Afghanistan" is of the skull of an ibex, not a Marco Polo sheep. Both belong to the subfamily Caprinae, but the horns of the sheep are not ridged and curl in a massive spiral, while the ibex's horns are essentially straight.

Todd Fuller
Montague, Massachusetts

PRINCE OF TIDES

I WAS DELIGHTED TO SEE THE JOHN Steinbeck article. However, I find it difficult to believe that *East of Eden*—one of his finest works—was not mentioned. Not only is this an important piece of American literature, but one of the main characters, Samuel Hamilton, embodies Steinbeck's appreciation for and understanding of man's relationship to the land.

Norma Jean Acker
Hastings, Michigan

STARTING IN FEBRUARY 2002, A YEAR-long commemoration of Steinbeck's centenary is taking place with more than 175 events in 39 states. Readers who would like more information can call the National Steinbeck Center at 831-796-3833 or visit the official Steinbeck Centennial Web site at www.steinbeck100.org for a full calendar of events.

Amanda Holder
National Steinbeck Center
Salinas, California

TOO MUCH?

I CERTAINLY AGREE WITH CRITIC Wendy Lesser that both the December 2001 and January 2002 issues were much too topical for my tastes. Throughout the years I have subscribed to SMITHSONIAN to get articles that I can't read in any other magazine—to acquire knowledge that expands my understanding of science, nature, culture, the esoteric and the downright unusual. Instead of trying so hard to be *timely*, SMITHSONIAN should stick to what it does best and continue to be *timeless*.

Donna J. Bell
Clarksville, New York

WHAT'S FOR DINNER?

I AM A PROFESSIONAL CHEF, AND I was horrified when I saw the display of ultraprocessed foods on the American table. The richest country that grows the most and best produce in the world, and this is the shameful sampling of what we eat?

Mary Jo Thoresen
Berkeley, California

DRAGONFLY DRAMAS

I ENJOYED THE ARTICLE ON THE NEW Mexico dragonflies. A couple of years ago my husband and I upgraded our yard. We turned an overgrown mess into a beautiful lagoon and moat, with multiple waterfalls and greenery. We even replaced a bedroom window with one that opens so that we could listen to the chuckling water. Neighbors and friends came to enjoy the aesthetic grandeur, until the first dragonfly arrived.

Since then we have been ruled by generations of brightly colored dragonflies. Every year they reappear, taking full advantage of the sprays of water from the falls and the coolness of the lily pads. Some are so big they scare the visitors away. They dive-bomb everyone, including our Jack Russell terrier. I wonder which is worse, a hummingbird or a dragonfly?

Jennifer Miller
Henderson, Nevada

Send letters for this column to LettersEd@simag.si.edu or to Letters Editor, SMITHSONIAN, P.O. Box 37012, MRC 951, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012. Letters should include your telephone number and address and may be edited for clarity and length. Send queries and comments about the Smithsonian Institution to info@info.si.edu or to VIARC, Public Inquiry Mail Service, P.O. Box 37012, Washington, D.C. 20013-7012.

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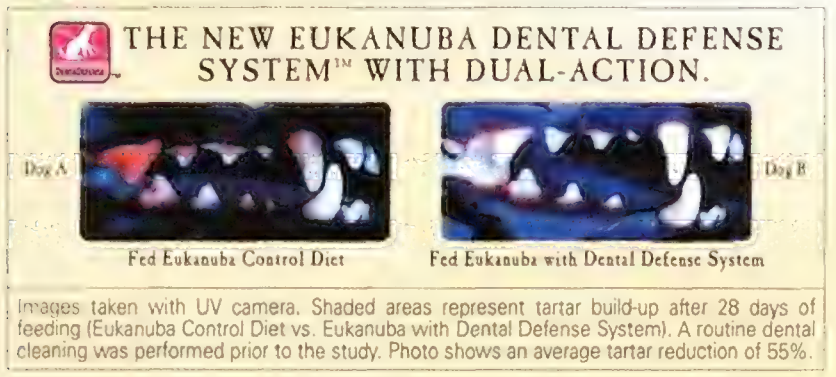
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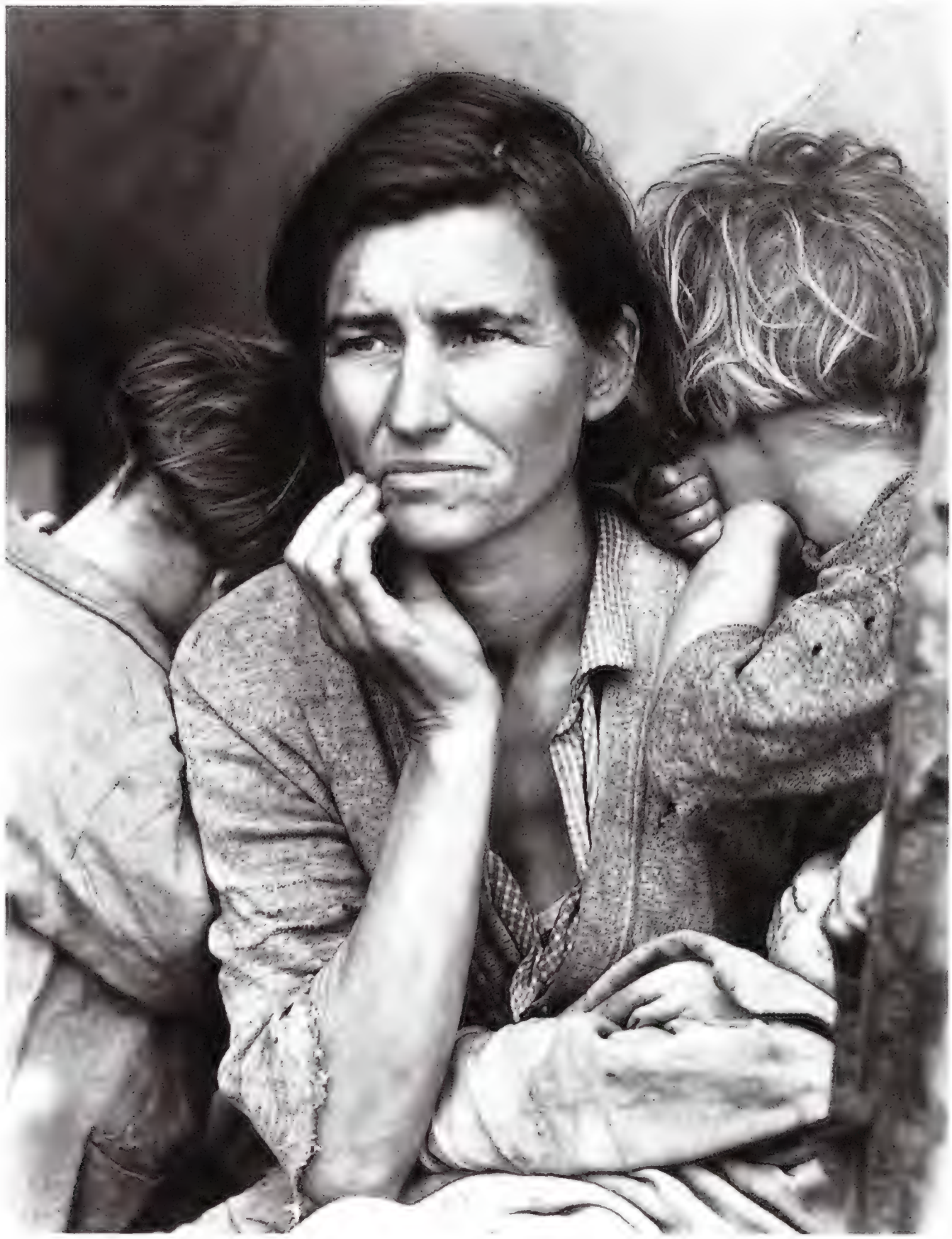

Migrant Madonna

ON A RAW, SOGGY DAY IN MARCH 1936, Dorothea Lange was driving home to Berkeley after six weeks spent photographing migrant workers in California, New Mexico and Arizona. Her staff position at the Resettlement Administration (RA), an agency set up to help tenant farmers during the Depression, was tenuous: since there was no budget for a photographer, Lange had been hired as a clerk-stenographer, and she invoiced her film and travel expenses under "clerical supplies."

INDELIBLE IMAGES

As Lange drove along the empty California highway that day, she noticed a sign that said Pea-Pickers Camp. Knowing that the pea crop had frozen, she debated for 20 miles before finally turning back. After pulling into the camp's muddy lane, Lange approached a female migrant worker, requested and got permission to photograph

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Thompson (left, in 1979 with, from left, daughters Katherine, Ruby and Norma at Norma's house in Modesto, California) saw herself in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*. Lange (bottom, in 1934) advocated using "the camera as though tomorrow you'd be stricken blind."

her and shot just five exposures. Lange's field notes read in part: "I did not ask her name or her history. She told me her age, that she was 32. She said that they had been living on frozen vegetables from the surrounding fields and birds that the children killed. She had just sold the tires from her car to buy food."

Back home, Lange developed the images and, clutching the still-wet prints, told the editor of the San Francisco *News* that migrant workers were slowly starving to death in Nipomo, California. The story the *News* ran about them featured Lange's pictures; UPI picked it up, and within days the federal government supplied the workers with 20,000 pounds of food. By that time, however, the woman and her family, desperate to find work, had moved on.

Nearly 40 years later, in 1975, Bill Ganzel, a photographer and producer for Nebraska Educational Television, set out to find some of the people photographed by the RA during the Depression, an idea he would eventually turn into a book, *Dust Bowl Descent*. At about the same time, Florence Thompson, the woman in the photograph, decided to tell her story to the local newspaper, the *Modesto Bee*.

Ganzel read the story, tracked down Thompson and, in 1979, in Modesto, California, photographed her and three of her daughters—Norma Rydlewski, Katherine McIntosh and Ruby Sprague—the same daughters featured in the original photograph. Thompson told Ganzel that "when Steinbeck wrote in *The Grapes of Wrath* about those people living under the bridge at Bakersfield—at one time we lived under that bridge. It was the same story. Didn't even have a tent then, just a ratty old quilt."

In the 1970s Thompson's ten children bought her a house in Modesto, but she soon moved back into a mobile home. "I need to have wheels under me," she said to Ganzel. When Thompson suffered a stroke in 1983, her children were forced to ask for contributions to pay for her medical care. Moved by her famous visage, people donated more than $15,000. Thompson died in Scotts Valley, California, on September 16, 1983.

Nancy Velez, manager of the photographic lab at the Library of Congress, says that Lange's photograph of Florence Thompson continues to be one of the most requested items in their collection. "It's the most striking image we have; it hits the heart," says Velez. "[Florence Thompson] is an American icon. If you know anything about photography, you'll know Lange's image immediately."

—Rebecca Maksel

BILL GANZEL; OAKLAND MUSEUM OF CALIFORNIA
DOROTHEA LANGE COLLECTION. GIFT OF PAUL S. TAYLOR

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Collecting Family Silver

THE SMITHSONIAN RECOGNIZES THE DISTINCTIVE JEWELRY OF THREE GENERATIONS OF SOUTHWESTERN SILVERSMITHS

BY STEPHANIE C. DOSTER

Frank "Pancho" Patania, Jr., crafts a silver chalice for a church at his workbench in the family's Tucson studio. He once made a 500-pound crucifix of cast-aluminum alloy.

JASON MILLSTEIN

BENT OVER A SCARRED WOODEN workbench laden with shears, files and other tools of his trade, Sam Patania snips sterling silver wire and sheet into tiny strips, ovals and crescents. Wearing jeans, a button-down shirt and magnifying glasses, Patania, 40, hammers the wire flat and solders the pieces together to create two clusters of turquoise blossoms with leafy silver stems—earrings designed 50 years ago by his late grandfather, Frank Patania, Sr., and still in demand today. At the other end of the narrow workshop, Sam's 69-year-old father, Frank Jr.—or "Pancho," as he is better known—bends gold into a ring setting.

For more than 60 years, the Patania family—father, son and grandson—has been creating remarkable designs in silver, gold and platinum in their Tucson, Arizona, shop. The Patanias, says Joanne Stuhr, curator of the Tucson Museum of Art, "are absolute master craftsmen." Last year, their work caught the eye of Kenneth R. Trapp, curator-in-charge at the Renwick Gallery of the Smithsonian American Art Museum, who added three Patania bracelets—each reflecting a distinct generational voice—to the 100-odd other items in the gallery's jewelry collection. Very simply, he says, "they appealed to me."

In Frank's circa 1950 floral spray design, 25 round turquoise blossoms rest on layers of veined silver leaves and wavy silver stems that wrap around the wrist. Pancho's bold and virtually seamless asymmetrical bracelet was fashioned about ten years later from six irregularly shaped pieces of silver soldered together over a small superstructure. Sam's 1999 bracelet—a clear green tourmaline wedged in 18-carat white gold—reflects his determination to break away from the types of pieces the older Patanias created. "The bracelets represent three generations of this family," Trapp says. "They really do have a story to tell."

That story began in Sicily.

Frank Patania, son of a cobbler, was born in Messina in eastern Sicily in 1899. At 6, he began learning the fundamentals of jewelry making as an apprentice to a local goldsmith—an arrangement that ended abruptly one December day in 1908.

Early that morning, family lore has it, a specter appeared at the foot of his mother's bed, telling her to gather her three children and take them outside. Moments later, an earthquake shook the family's house to the ground. The Patanias were spared, but they set sail for New York the following year.

As an immigrant son, Frank made tassels and braided cord for a milliner and worked as a factory machinist during World War I. After the war, he landed a job with Manhattan jewelers Goldsmith & Stern, where he was groomed as a designer, working with platinum ring mountings and cameos.

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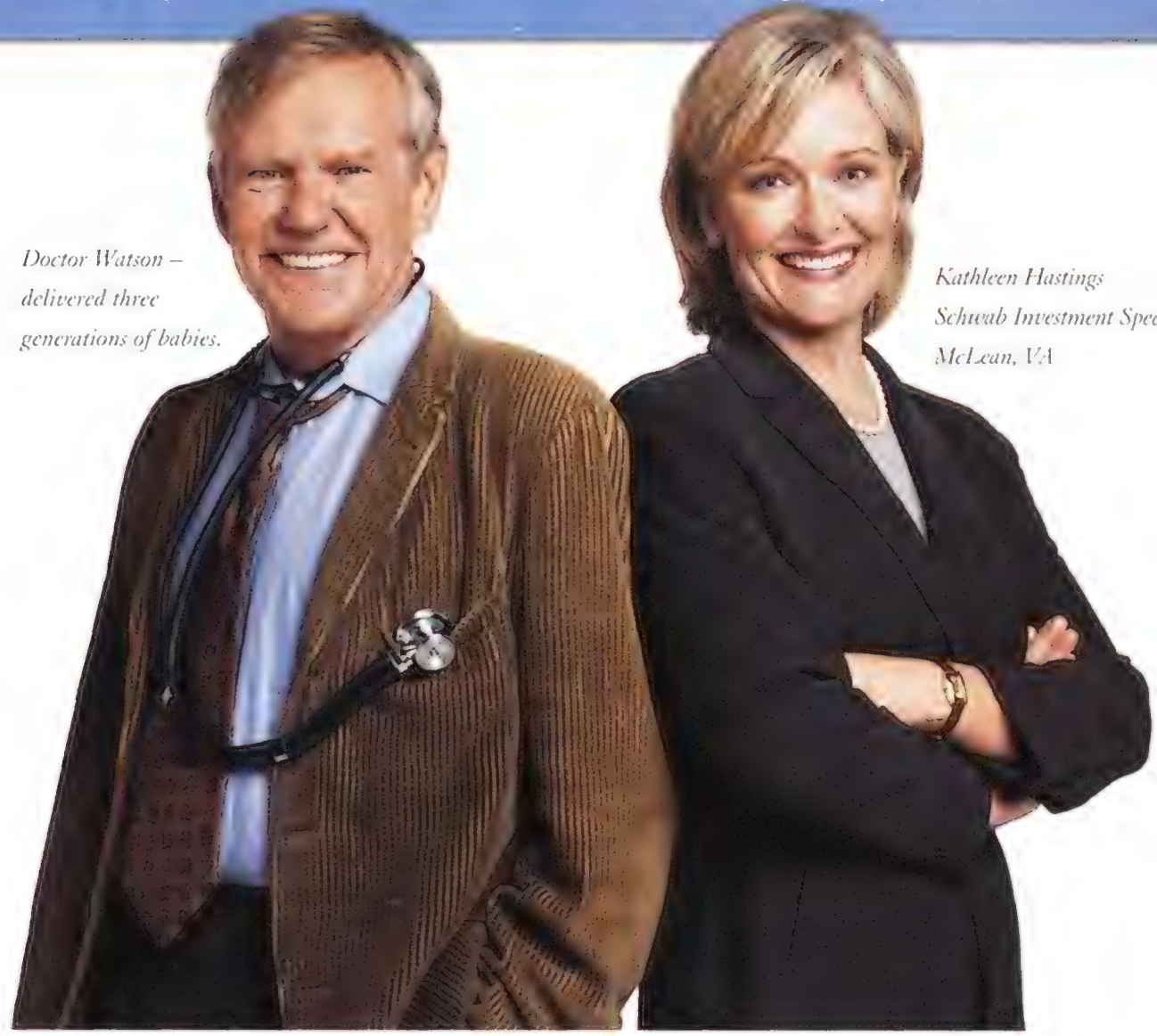

Doctor Watson – delivered three generations of babies.

Kathleen Hastings
Schwab Investment Specialist,
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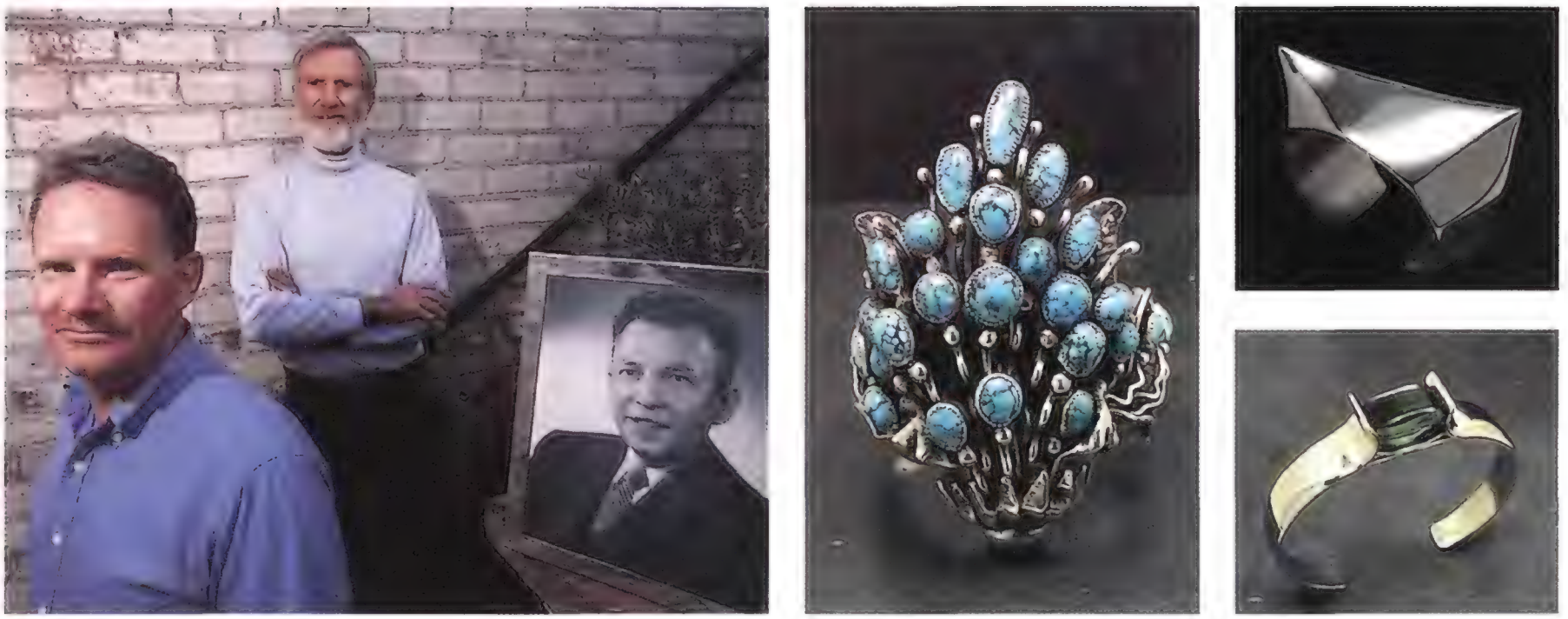

Sam Patania (above left) made the bracelet at far right, bottom, of 18k white gold and tourmaline. His father, Frank Jr., by the wall, fabricated the sterling silver bracelet at far right, top. Frank Sr., in the portrait, created the silver and turquoise bracelet (middle).

When Frank contracted tuberculosis at age 24, his employers shipped him out to Santa Fe, New Mexico, to convalesce. But the same scenic beauty, brilliant light and ethnic allure that had attracted painter Georgia O'Keeffe and novelist D. H. Lawrence to northern New Mexico also captivated him. When his health rallied, he decided to stay, and in 1927 he borrowed money to open his own shop in the center of town.

Local Native Americans had been making silver jewelry since the mid-19th century. Soon Frank began to combine their heavy silver and stone materials with his own stylistic approach. The native techniques "got his thinking away from the very fine, precise platinum works Back East into something bolder and more powerful," Pancho says.

Beginning in the 1930s, Frank and his new wife, Aurora Masocco, befriended such well-known local painters as Randall Davey and Lady Dorothy Brett, and later, actress Greer Garson. With a welcoming sofa, fireplace and full coffeepot, the shop became a frequent stop for Georgia O'Keeffe, who was known to use the Patanias' telephone and sit and chat or stash her packages behind the counters while she ran errands around town.

Business was brisk in Santa Fe during the busy summer season, but Frank decided to expand the business to a warmer winter climate and, in 1937, settled on a spot in downtown Tucson. Shuttling back and forth between Tucson and Santa Fe, Pancho and his two sisters grew up in the shops alongside a team of Navajo, Hopi and Spanish-American apprentices. Pancho recalls his father telling him to make dozens of tiny silver beads, which were used as ornamentation on larger pieces; each time Pancho finished a batch, his father would tell him to make more. "It was tedious, but it was a blessing in disguise," says Pancho. "Dad trained me as an apprentice would be trained under a master."

Pancho joined the family business full-time in 1956 at age 24; his father died of cancer in Tucson at age 64 in 1964, and Pancho took over the shop. Drawing inspiration from architecture and sculpture, he simplified, streamlined and updated his father's designs. Pancho still divides his time between Tucson and Santa Fe, where he owns a shop with his wife, Donna.

Ten years ago, Sam took over the Tucson studio and showroom, which sit in an adobe building on a broad boulevard. He learned the trade as a teenager working part-time in the shop, and as a student in metalsmithing and gemology courses. In one of those classes, he met his future wife, Monica Borquez. It's too soon to say if their two young children will follow in the family's footsteps.

Dazzled by the glorious colors he saw every year with his father at the International Gem and Mineral Show in Tucson, Sam began using precious metals and stones in his work—a style that differentiated him from his father and grandfather.

"I love working with expensive materials," he says. "I like the idea that there's intrinsic value in the pieces apart from my work." While he produces jewelry that is distinctly his own, drawing inspiration from haute couture and other sources, Sam's designs also are influenced by the work of the elder Patanias.

"Almost all of their classic pieces are fashionable, up to date," Sam says, "and collectors have the same passionate connection to their jewelry as I do. They love it all."

When she isn't visiting family in Tucson, Stephanie C. Doster is a reporter for the New Orleans Times-Picayune.

JASON MILLSTEIN, SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM, GIFT OF THE PATANIA FAMILY (3)

KING'S ROAD FINLAND

The King's Road is the historical route, dating back to the 13th century, between the old northern capitals. The King's Road passes along the entire Finnish Southern Coast, and it formed an important connection between the powerful kingdoms of Sweden and Russia. The King's Road is a remarkable testament to history: old stone churches, iron mills, powerful estates and other unique sites. The Vikings were the original users of this road from 800-1050 on their way east.

On the King's Road, medieval Turku Castle is open for visitors.

The King's messengers and postmen on foot or on horseback would deliver urgent messages from Stockholm to Turku and St. Petersburg by using this ancient route in the 13th century. In those days, the road also linked the venerable castles of Turku and Vyborg. In the mid-14th century, the King's Road became an artery road, along which manors, farmhouses, inns and taverns were built. The manor houses were owned by mighty noble families who provided overnight accommodations for Swedish Kings and Russian Czars alike. In the 18th century, kings, czars, soldiers, bishops, artists and merchants in horse-driven carriages traveled between the east and west. The oldest towns along the Finland King's Road are Turku (founded in 1229 and a former capital) and Porvoo (founded in 1346). Helsinki, the focal point of the King's Road, was founded in 1550.

Historical celebration at Suomenlinna Fortress Island, entrance to Helsinki's spectacular harbor.

Photos: Finnish Tourist Board

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When Mount Nyiragongo erupted January 17, a 200-foot-wide river of molten rock devastated Goma, one of the largest cities in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It split the city in half, setting off explosions, destroying homes, shops and public facilities, and forcing nearly 500,000 people to flee for their lives; dozens were killed. "We survived the Belgians. We survived our dictators and our wars, and poverty on top of poverty," returning resident Peter Karube, 66, told the *Washington Post*. "We will get through this somehow." Photograph by Pedro Ugarte/AFP

POINTS OF INTEREST

Mountain Makeover

NEW HAMPSHIRE'S MOUNTAIN VIEW HOUSE IS BACK IN BUSINESS, STILL GRAND—BUT NO LONGER SNOBBISH

BY DONALD DALE JACKSON

The elaborate resort (depicted on a 1906 postcard) offered guests steam heat, electric bells and "in-doors music" for dancing.

THE FIRST TIME I SAW THE MOUNTAIN VIEW HOUSE I could almost feel its pain. The veranda sagged, paint was peeling, the lawn was a mess. It reminded me of a down-at-the-heels dowager barely able to stand unaided.

That was a year ago. I was roaming New Hampshire's White Mountains to see what was left of the grand resorts that flourished there between the Civil War and the advent of automobile tourism in the 1920s. At their peak, back in the days of railroad travel, there were more than 200 of them. Almost exclusively for the upper crust, they offered amenities ranging from ladies' parlors and lawn tennis courts to private railway spurs. "There has never been a collection of hotels of comparable grandeur anywhere, certainly not in a mountain setting," humorist Bill Bryson wrote in *A Walk in the Woods*. Today only a few survive, including the 200-room Mount Washington in Bretton Woods and the 126-year-old Balsams in Dixville Notch. "Grand hotels are an endangered species now," laments New Hampshire historian R. Stuart Wallace.

The original part of Mountain View House, which in many ways epitomized those elegant old-timers, was built in Whitefield in 1866. When I went back a few months ago, the resort was an anthill of activity. Carpenters, painters and electricians swarmed all over it. The three-story tower that is its majestic centerpiece was being repaired. Much of the yellow facade had been stripped off. Now the hotel looked as eager as a young bride.

The difference was Kevin Craffey. A 37-year-old developer from Duxbury, Massachusetts, Craffey paid $1.3 million for the decrepit fixer-upper in 1998. Then he put together a $15 million package of loans, grants and tax credits to finance a renovation. "I was looking the place over right after I bought it," he recalled. "It was freezing. I wanted to turn on the boiler, but it had been about 12 years since it had been used, and the boiler had been built in the 1890s. The guy with me said, 'Are you serious?' I figured it would be an omen. We fired it up and it came right on."

I donned a hard hat. The oval dining room was being

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transformed into a ballroom. The restaurant that replaces it will no longer require a coat and tie. I noticed that a number of the guest rooms still had the original louvered doors that allowed air to circulate. "Six or seven layers of wallpaper!" Craffey snorted. "Can you imagine?"

Craffey wants to combine enhancements, such as computers in every room, with a 1920s look. While we were talking, a visitor arrived with a 1935 guest registration card signed by then-First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt. "Something like that happens every day," Craffey said. "I heard from a woman who was a waitress here in the 1920s. She wants to come back for her 90th birthday party. A priest wrote and told me he got his 'call' in the observation tower. He remembered dancing with Bette Davis in the ballroom."

New owner Kevin Craffey had his 50-person crew upgrade 937 windows, restoring the frames and reusing 5,662 original panes of wavy glass to preserve a historic look.

The summerlong sojourners who stayed at the Mountain View in the 1880s and '90s came to be seen, which is why, says White Mountains historian Dick Hamilton, the dining rooms were always round or octagonal. "The guests didn't want corners. It was socially unacceptable to sit in a corner."

A typical day began with a leisurely breakfast, followed by a stroll, perhaps a card game or some time with a book in one of the wicker chairs in the lobby. Lunch was a two-hour, multicourse extravaganza. "Then there would be tea, and the hotel orchestra would play," Hamilton said. "Guests would be in afternoon dress, blazers maybe for the men. Then everyone would go upstairs to change for dinner." After dinner there would be a promenade on the long veranda, followed by the evening entertainment.

"One evening last week an old-time spelling match was indulged in at the Mountain View House with about thirty contestants," a social note in a local newspaper reported in 1888. The teacher "tested his pupils until every one was down." Another evening featured a "gayest hop" with music by "two Italians, with harp and violin."

Individual rooms were often identified by the names of their regular occupants. F. Schuyler Dodge, Jr., who ran the hotel in the 1970s at the end of his family's 113-year tenure as owners, acknowledged the elitism the hotel exemplified. "Oh, we tried to create snob appeal," he said. "We worked at it. People felt elevated, you know, if they could say they stayed at the Mountain View House. It was foolishness, but we stayed full." Jewish guests were excluded. "We ran ads that said there were Protestant and Catholic churches nearby," Dodge remembered. "They got the message."

The more stories like this I heard the more my infatuation began to fade. Obviously, the lady I had been so smitten by had a blemish or two. Many of the Mountain View's guests were self-indulgent twits whose insulated world rested on layers of privilege, condescension and discrimination. Schuyler's brother John Dodge, who worked at the family hostelry before becoming a developer, recalls meeting regular guest James Hazen Hyde disembarking from an ocean liner in New York City. "He had one steamer trunk just for shoes, and another just for medicine," said Dodge. "When we got to Whitefield, he said he wanted someone outside his room at all hours, to draw his bath and do whatever. Then he called the chef and demanded pheasant under glass, room service. The chef said it wasn't on the menu. Mr. Hyde insisted, so the chef said OK. He sent his son out to the barn to shoot a pigeon. Mr. Hyde said it was delicious."

The glory of the grand hotels was not in their social attitudes but in their architectural majesty and spacious grace. Craffey equates their meticulous craftsmanship and solidity with New England. "You look at this place—there's no better definition of Yankee."

The new Mountain View Grand will be open year-round. Instead of embodying snobbery, it will welcome everyone, though at decidedly upscale ($175 to $375 a night) prices. But now that Craffey has rebuilt it, the big question is: Will they come? There are scoffers, says Stuart Wallace, but "I hope he makes it. I think everyone in New Hampshire wants to help him." Even if Craffey fails, "I will have fixed this great building so it will last another 100 years," he says. "And that's not bad." Not bad at all.

DAVID MCLAIN/AURORA

"ALONG WITH ALL THE GREAT MEMORIES HAS COME SOMETHING I THOUGHT I'D NEVER EXPERIENCE—THE PAIN OF OSTEOARTHRITIS."

—DOROTHY HAMILL

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT VIOXX.

People with allergic reactions, such as asthma, to aspirin or other arthritis medicines should not take VIOXX. In rare cases, serious stomach problems, such as bleeding, can occur without warning.

Tell your doctor if you have liver or kidney problems, or are pregnant. Also, VIOXX should not be used by women in late pregnancy.

VIOXX has been extensively studied in large clinical trials. Commonly reported side effects included upper respiratory infection, diarrhea, nausea and high blood pressure. Report any unusual symptoms to your doctor.

ASK YOUR DOCTOR OR HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL ABOUT VIOXX.

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VIOXX® (pronounced "VI-ox")
for Osteoarthritis and Pain
Generic name: rofecoxib ("ro-fa-COX-ib")

You should read this information before you start taking VIOXX*. Also, read the leaflet each time you refill your prescription, in case any information has changed. This leaflet provides only a summary of certain information about VIOXX. Your doctor or pharmacist can give you an additional leaflet that is written for health professionals that contains more complete information. This leaflet does not take the place of careful discussions with your doctor. You and your doctor should discuss VIOXX when you start taking your medicine and at regular checkups.

What is VIOXX?

VIOXX is a nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID) that is used to reduce pain and inflammation (swelling and soreness). VIOXX is available as a tablet or a liquid that you take by mouth.

VIOXX is a medicine for:
- relief of osteoarthritis (the arthritis caused by age-related "wear and tear" on bones and joints)
- management of acute pain in adults (like the short-term pain you can get after a dental or surgical operation)
- treatment of menstrual pain (pain during women's monthly periods).

Who should not take VIOXX?

Do not take VIOXX if you:
- have had an allergic reaction such as asthma attacks, hives, or swelling of the throat and face to aspirin or other NSAIDs (for example, ibuprofen and naproxen).
- have had an allergic reaction to rofecoxib, which is the active ingredient of VIOXX, or to any of its inactive ingredients. (See Inactive Ingredients at the end of this leaflet.)

What should I tell my doctor before and during treatment with VIOXX?

Tell your doctor if you are:
- pregnant or plan to become pregnant. VIOXX should not be used in late pregnancy because it may harm the fetus.
- breast-feeding or plan to breast-feed. It is not known whether VIOXX is passed through to human breast milk and what its effects could be on a nursing child.

Tell your doctor if you have:
- kidney disease
- liver disease
- heart failure
- high blood pressure
- had an allergic reaction to aspirin or other NSAIDs
- had a serious stomach problem in the past.

Tell your doctor about:
- any other medical problems or allergies you have now or have had.
- all medicines that you are taking or plan to take, even those you can get without a prescription.

Tell your doctor if you develop:
- ulcer or bleeding symptoms (for instance, stomach burning or black stools, which are signs of possible stomach bleeding).
- unexplained weight gain or swelling of the feet and/or legs.
- skin rash or allergic reactions. If you have a severe allergic reaction, get medical help right away.

How should I take VIOXX?

VIOXX should be taken once a day. Your doctor will decide what dose of VIOXX you should take and how long you should take it. You may take VIOXX with or without food.

Can I take VIOXX with other medicines?

Tell your doctor about all of the other medicines you are taking or plan to take while you are on VIOXX, even other medicines that you can get without a prescription. Your doctor may want to check that your medicines are working properly together if you are taking other medicines such as:
- methotrexate (a medicine used to suppress the immune system)
- warfarin (a blood thinner)
- rifampin (an antibiotic)
- ACE inhibitors (medicines used for high blood pressure and heart failure)
- lithium (a medicine used to treat a certain type of depression).

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What are the possible side effects of VIOXX?

Serious but rare side effects that have been reported in patients taking VIOXX and/or related medicines have included:

- Serious stomach problems, such as stomach and intestinal bleeding, can occur with or without warning symptoms. These problems, if severe, could lead to hospitalization or death. Although this happens rarely, you should watch for signs that you may have this serious side effect and tell your doctor right away.
- Serious allergic reactions including swelling of the face, lips, tongue, and/or throat which may cause difficulty breathing or swallowing and wheezing occur rarely but may require treatment right away. Severe skin reactions have also been reported.
- Serious kidney problems occur rarely, including acute kidney failure and worsening of chronic kidney failure.
- Severe liver problems, including hepatitis, jaundice and liver failure, occur rarely in patients taking NSAIDs, including VIOXX. Tell your doctor if you develop symptoms of liver problems. These include nausea, tiredness, itching, tenderness in the right upper abdomen, and flu-like symptoms.

In addition, the following side effects have been reported: anxiety, confusion, depression, hair loss, hallucinations, increased levels of potassium in the blood, low blood cell counts, palpitations, pancreatitis, tingling sensation, unusual headache with stiff neck (aseptic meningitis), vertigo.

More common, but less serious side effects reported with VIOXX have included the following:

Upper and/or lower respiratory infection and/or inflammation
Headache
Dizziness
Diarrhea
Nausea and/or vomiting
Heartburn, stomach pain and upset
Swelling of the legs and/or feet
High blood pressure
Back pain
Tiredness
Urinary tract infection.

These side effects were reported in at least 2% of osteoarthritis patients receiving daily doses of VIOXX 12.5 mg to 25 mg in clinical studies.

The side effects described above do not include all of the side effects reported with VIOXX. Do not rely on this leaflet alone for information about side effects. Your doctor or pharmacist can discuss with you a more complete list of side effects. Any time you have a medical problem you think may be related to VIOXX, talk to your doctor.

What else can I do to help manage my osteoarthritis pain?

Talk to your doctor about:
- Exercise
- Controlling your weight
- Hot and cold treatments
- Using support devices.

What else should I know about VIOXX?

This leaflet provides a summary of certain information about VIOXX. If you have any questions or concerns about VIOXX, osteoarthritis or pain, talk to your health professional. Your pharmacist can give you an additional leaflet that is written for health professionals.

Do not share VIOXX with anyone else; it was prescribed only for you. It should be taken only for the condition for which it was prescribed.

Keep VIOXX and all medicines out of the reach of children.

Inactive Ingredients:

Oral suspension: citric acid (monohydrate), sodium citrate (dihydrate), sorbitol solution, strawberry flavor, xanthan gum, sodium methylparaben, sodium propylparaben.

Tablets: croscarmellose sodium, hydroxypropyl cellulose, lactose, magnesium stearate, microcrystalline cellulose, and yellow ferric oxide.

Issued July 2001

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Flying High

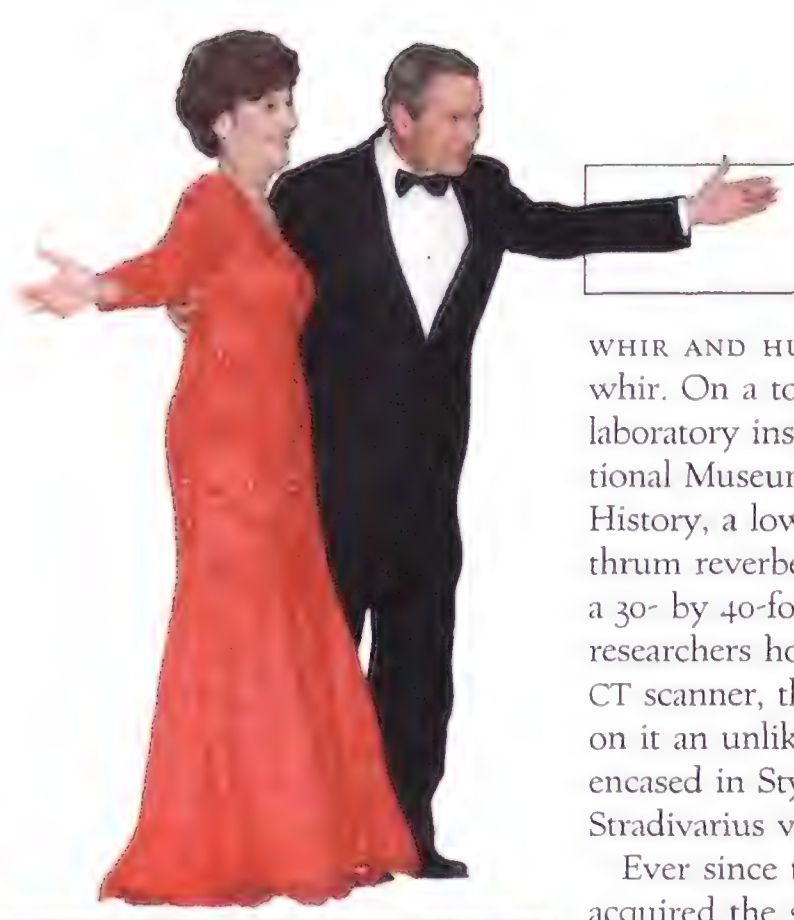
"IT'S AMAZING," SAYS DRAKE Smith, "when you have 30,000 people gathered together on the Mall, their kites soaring in every direction." For a number of years now, the 55-year-old computer engineer has volunteered as one of the organizers behind the Smithsonian's quirky and colorful rite of spring.

No matter the weather, the annual Kite Festival, held each March (this year's date is the 23rd) for 35 years, draws aficionados from around the nation and the world. Dragons, demons and dragonflies soar overhead, whipped by downdrafts, buffeted by gusts.

This time around, Smith is bringing along one of his favorites, a rose and periwinkle 12- by 20-foot airfoil he snapped up at an auction. (He paid $300 for it.) He has, he reports, repaired and restitched his find so many times that he feels he built it from scratch. "It looks like a giant tooth," he says. "It's basically a flying duffel bag full of nylon."

His vintage acquisition might even qualify as a time machine. That's because, when the middle-aged kitesman lofts the airfoil into the sky, he reports, "I'm 8 years old again." —*Aimee Agresti*

JEFF TINSLEY/SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION



Lady in Red

FIRST LADY LAURA BUSH says she's proud that her inaugural gown joined a "collection that honors the many great American women in our history." Mrs. Bush's red Chantilly lace sheath is now on view at the National Museum of American History.

Anatomy of a Violin

WHIR AND HUM, HUM AND whir. On a top floor laboratory inside the National Museum of Natural History, a low-pitched thrum reverberates. Inside a 30- by 40-foot room, researchers hover over a CT scanner, then position on it an unlikely patient encased in Styrofoam: a Stradivarius violin.

Ever since the museum acquired the $750,000 diagnostic tool, donated by Siemens Medical Systems two years ago, scientists have subjected artifacts as various as mummies, dinosaur bones and ancient earthenware pots to high-tech scrutiny.

Now a team of scientists and technicians hopes to elucidate the inner secrets of some of the world's rarest musical instruments. Heading up the collaborative effort are Bruno Frohlich, a NMNH anthropologist who directs the scanning lab, Mel Wachowiak, a conservator at the Center for Materials Research, and stringed-instrument specialist Gary Sturm, from the National Museum of American History. Sturm oversees the Smithsonian's collection of four violins, one viola and two cellos produced by Italy's legendary 18th-century artisan, Antonio Stradivari. These holdings include 5 of only 11 instruments hand-ornamented in wood carving and ivory inlay by the master himself.

Into the scanner: a Strad.

"The greatest mystery," says Sturm, "is what makes these instruments sound the way they do? Is it the varnish, the nature of the wood perhaps, or its thickness? Or any other of a number of variables?"

So far, over the past year, Sturm and his colleagues have generated thousands of computerized cross-sections of various rare instruments. With a click of the mouse, he zeros in on an image of a violin, pointing out a gradual thickening of the wood at its center. This construction detail, he explains, "affects the way the instrument responds to the musician."

The CT scan's singular utility, he adds, lies in its noninvasiveness. "Now we know the dimensions of Stradivari's instruments. We could not have determined that without doing the unthinkable—dismembering his creations."

—Stephanie Cavanaugh

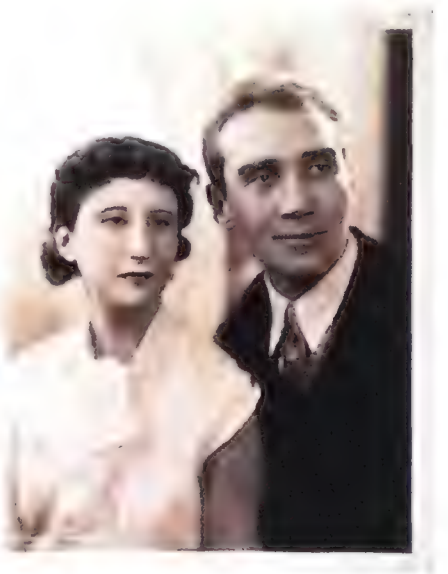
The Wright Stuff

NEXT TIME YOU STROLL around Crate & Barrel or Pottery Barn, taking in the array of mass-produced, winningly displayed housewares and furnishings, note the homage due an influential, if little-known, American industrial designer.

During the 1940s and '50s, Russel Wright helped change the look of America's interiors by championing high-quality objects for day-to-day use in the home. His inexpensive, factory-made dinnerware, appliances, textiles and furniture reflected a new and accessible aesthetic.

And Wright's wife, Mary, a marketing genius who dreamed up department store presentations and advertising campaigns, transformed her husband, at that time, into a name brand. Almost single-handedly, she paved the way for contemporary domestic gurus from Martha Stewart to Ralph Lauren.

"Russel Wright: Inventing American Lifestyle"—at the Smithsonian's Cooper-Hewitt, National Design Museum in New York City through September 15—goes a long way to remedy the fact that the seminal designer's contributions have been in



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Bright Eyes

BERANI (MEANING BRAVE), a tiger cub born September 18, increases to five the National Zoo's population of rare Sumatran great cats. On view for a few hours a day, the 34-pound male frolics alongside his mother, Soyono. "Every birth is important," says curator John Seidensticker, "because the species' future in the wild is very uncertain."

Russel Wright's streamlined and sturdy dishware introduced casual chic to the American table.

large measure overlooked.

The first major retrospective of Wright's work features more than 350 objects, from tableware to fabrics and photographs. "Very few people have had this kind of influence on everyday life," says cocurator (with Robert Schonfeld) Donald Albrecht.

The Wrights espoused their views in their 1950 best-seller, *Guide to Easier Living*, a breezy primer on everything from low-maintenance upholstery to suburban patio parties.

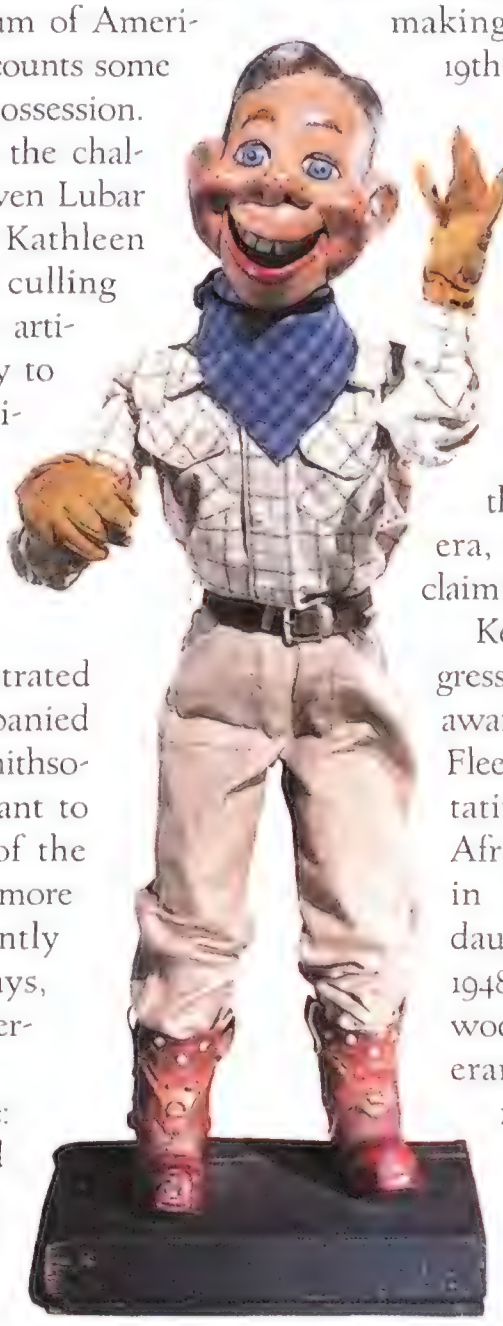
But their low-key approach did not sit well with etiquette doyenne Emily Post, who believed the couple was instrumental in lowering standards of decorum. On their part, the Wrights dismissed Post as a "style dictator" and predicted that the "new American home will be a simpler place to live." As we juggle bowls of microwave popcorn en route to the family room and home entertainment center, it's clear who had the correct fix on the future. —*Mary Ellin Lerner*

Bequeathed to History

WHO HASN'T AVOWED, IN A MOMENT OF sentiment, that one or another of his or her special things belongs in the Smithsonian? Of course, the Institution can't absorb every offer. The National Museum of American History alone already counts some 3.2 million objects in its possession. Given that scale, imagine the challenge faced by curator Steven Lubar and assistant curator Kathleen Kendrick, charged with culling from that total a mere 250 artifacts—from Howdy Doody to George Washington's uniform—for their newly published book, *Legacies: Collecting America's History at the Smithsonian* (SI Press, 2001).

Their handsomely illustrated volume, which is accompanied by a colorful Web site (smithsonianlegacies.si.edu), is meant to chronicle the evolution of the museum's collections over more than 150 years. "Apparently simple objects," Lubar says, "often are complex in interesting ways."

Witness the cover choice: an octagonal table, crafted by German immigrant Peter Glass in 1860 and donated to the Institution in 1968 by his granddaughter. The furnishing, inlaid with more than 30,000 pieces of wood, is the work of a skilled artisan who designed marquetry in his spare time after making a new life as a farmer in 19th-century Wisconsin.



Each of the two curator's personal favorites emphasizes, too, the eclectic, even quixotic, nature of the collections. Lubar chose an intriguing, offbeat footnote to technological innovation: a rotary lens apparatus, once claimed to be the model for the first motion picture camera, circa 1896. (The inventor's claim has been discredited.)

Kendrick picked an 1865 Congressional Medal of Honor. It was awarded to Sgt. Maj. Christian A. Fleetwood, a Baltimore representative of the thousands of African-Americans who fought in the Civil War. When his daughter persuaded curators in 1948 to accept the medal, Fleetwood became the first such veteran to be honored in the national museum. "I serve my race," Edith Fleetwood wrote in 1947, "rather than glorify my father."

—*Ann Geracimos*

RUSSEL WRIGHT PAPERS; JESSIE COHEN/SI; KIM NIELSON

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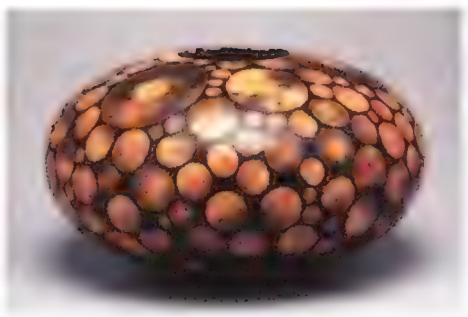

At the Renwick

THE DEMANDING CRAFT OF creating turned-wood objects, cut from that unforgiving material as it spins on a lathe, was once confined largely to high school shop classes, the home workshop or the factory.

But for 70 or more years now, artisans have appropriated this technique, producing sophisticated, satisfying pieces, ranging from salad bowls to trinket boxes, vases and abstract sculptures.

"Wood Turning since 1930," at the Renwick Gallery from March 15 through July 14, traces the evolution of this increasingly popular, and collectible, craft form.

For more Smithsonian Institution events, please go to www.smithsonianmag.com.

Symbols in the Sand

CHALK, MODELING CLAY and 20 bowls of brightly colored sand might sound more playful than prayerful. But not for a band of Tibetan Buddhist monks, who gathered this January in the depths of the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, there to construct a sacred sand mandala—a tightly balanced, geometric painting depicting the cosmos and attendant deities. Within this tradition of sacred iconography, the mandala depicts the spiritual configuration of the universe, usually taking the form of concentric circles.

The monks were visiting Washington, D.C., on an extended tour of the United States from their base in exile at the Drepung Loseling Monastery in southern India, when the events of September 11 occurred. To offer healing and protection to America, they turned to the same spiritual tool their ancestors relied on in times of crisis and conflict: the mandala. "We felt it was a moral duty [to make one]," says director Geshe Lobsang Tenzin. From thousands of prescribed ancient mandala designs, the Dalai Lama, the monks' spiritual leader, chose the image of the Buddha Akshobhya, a deity of steadfastness.

During their two-week residency at the Sackler, the 20 monks began and ended each day with chanting and meditating—a ritual punctuated by the playing of drums, cymbals and horns, the ringing of bells and the donning of orange hats with yellow crests. Working in small teams, the monks crouched over a chalk outline, coaxing forth the edges of a slowly widening, brilliantly hued circle of sand. When finished, it would measure almost seven feet in diameter—one of the largest made in the West.

Laboring in near silence and without written instructions, each of the four or five monks on duty held in one hand a cone-shaped metal funnel, called a *chak-pur*, through which the sand flowed, much like ink through a fine-tipped pen. With the other hand, he grasped a small rod, scraping a grated ridge on the shaft of the chak-pur and thereby regulating the flow of sand.

As grain after fine grain fell onto the raised surface, sharply etched images emerged: a lotus here, a parasol there, next a wheel, each surrounding the Buddha Akshobhya. Even a low ridge of modeling clay—a wall enclosing the central deity—disappeared under a multi-striped ribbon of sand. Painstaking? Yes. "But it is more about devotion than patience," observes Shedrup Gyeltsen. "You feel you are doing something good, something very positive."

Mistakes happen. "But the good thing about sand is, if you pour over it, you can hide a mistake," says Geshe Lobsang, smiling. He and his companions plan to construct mandalas in dozens of other American cities over the next year.

With the completion of the Sackler mandala January 27, only one task remained; to dismantle it and release the sand into the nearby Tidal Basin. "It's a gesture to share the prayers and blessings with the whole world," says Geshe Lobsang. "And to remind us of the impermanence of things."

—*Victoria Dawson*

Constructing an ephemeral masterpiece, Tibetan monks at the Sackler work in brilliantly hued sand to create a sacred painting.

RENWICK GALLERY OF THE SMITHSONIAN AMERICAN ART MUSEUM (2); ARTHUR M. SACKLER GALLERY, SI

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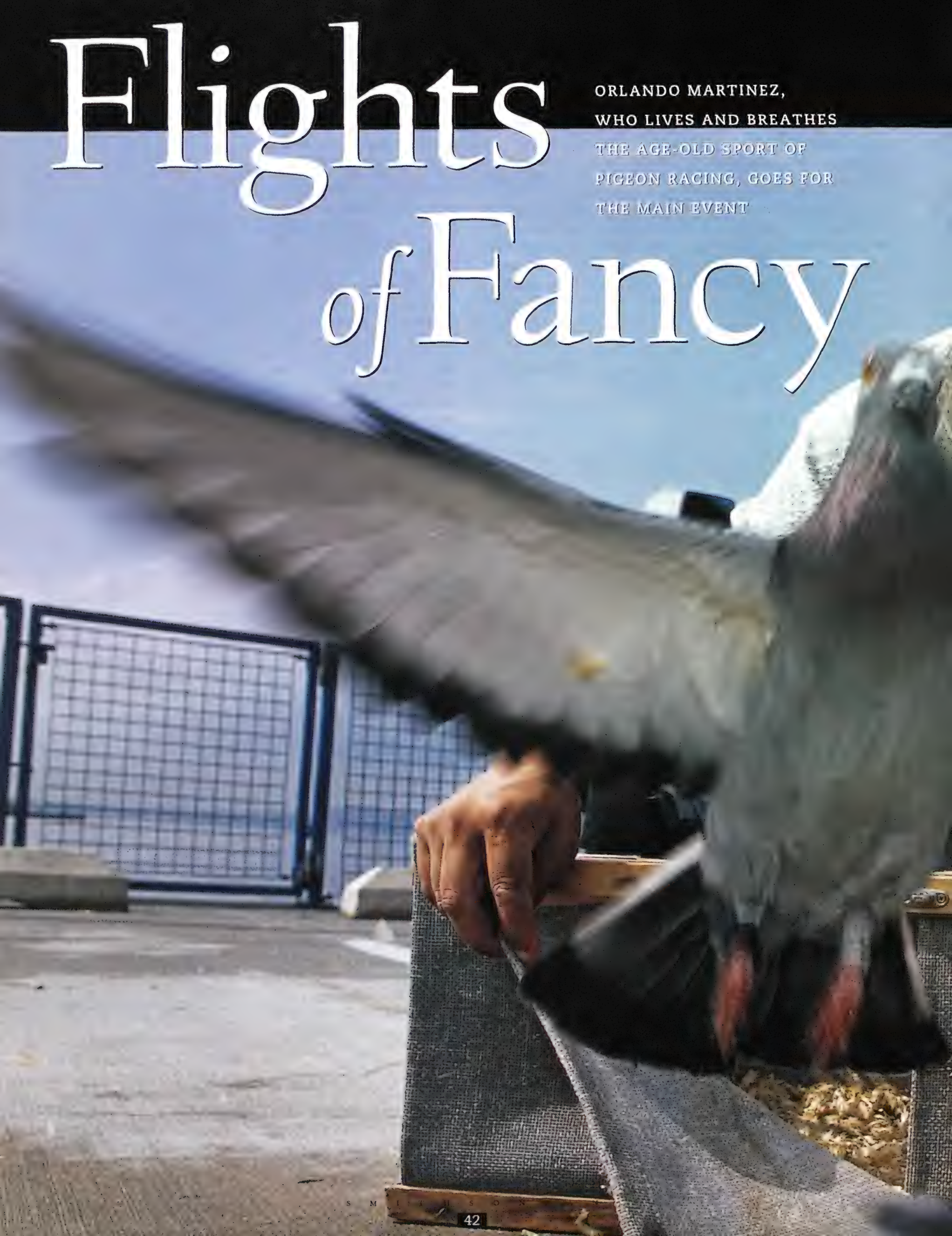
Flights of Fancy

ORLANDO MARTINEZ, WHO LIVES AND BREATHES THE AGE-OLD SPORT OF PIGEON RACING, GOES FOR THE MAIN EVENT



Marlon Brando (with Arthur Keegan and Eva Marie Saint) played a pigeon-racing dockworker in *On the Waterfront* (1954).

BY ANDREW D. BLECHMAN ◆ PHOTOGRAPHS BY CAMERON DAVIDSON

IT IS OCTOBER 21, AND ORLANDO MARTINEZ IS PACING THE ROOF OF HIS BROOKLYN TOWN HOUSE, A cell phone pressed to one ear, a cordless phone to the other, while his girlfriend, Omayra Reyes, fidgets on a lawn chair nearby. Across the East River the sun's crisp fall brilliance reflects off Manhattan's glass-and-steel skyline, but Martinez keeps staring southwest, above Staten Island. Somewhere out there a flock of his homing pigeons is winging in from West Virginia at speeds approaching 60 miles an hour, zeroing in on their loft with the precision of laser-guided missiles.

Martinez is just one of a hundred pigeon racers scanning the horizon from rooftops across New York City, New Jersey and Long Island. The racers are in constant contact with one another, their cell phones chirping incessantly. News of a sighting is relayed west to east from rooftop to rooftop. At stake is more than $15,000 in prize money and a year's worth of bragging rights for winning the Main Event, one of the pigeon community's most competitive races.

"To walk into your racing club knowing that your bird beat out a thousand others because you put in the time, bred it right, fed it right and trained it right—well, few things compare," says Martinez, 42. Rumors of a sighting at a competitor's loft in Queens have him on edge, but he has every reason to believe his little minions will lead the pack today as they have for much of the season. "I'm kicking so much ass this year, people think I'm using steroids," he says.

Although rooftop pigeon coops may seem as anachronistic as the Brooklyn Dodgers, pigeon racing stubbornly refuses to disappear. It remains wildly popular in Europe, where fanciers include Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, and in America it is kept alive by a close-knit community of aficionados like Martinez, who keeps a large coop of racing homers—birds that have little in common with scruffy street pigeons. Coming from carefully documented lineages, and costing up to $100,000 each, homers are swift, powerful fliers with large breast muscles that account for 40 percent of their body weight, and they have an uncanny ability to find their way home. Racers speak of consistent winners with the sort of reverence usually reserved for stakes-winning Thoroughbreds. The walls of their homes are often filled with pigeon birth charts, pigeon diplomas, pigeon race certificates, pigeon trophies and pigeon portraits.

SEVEN MONTHS EARLIER, ON A BRUtally cold and windy day, Martinez parks his truck outside a small cinder block building beneath the Brooklyn-Queens Expressway and warms his hands on the dashboard vents. A sign reads Boro Park Homing Pigeon Club, Est. 1924. Today, March 12, marks the first meeting of the year. "Old bird" races—any bird born in the prior year and before—begin in the spring, followed by relentless summer training for the lucrative, all-important autumn "young bird" races. "Young birds are exciting because they've never raced before," Martinez says. "It's about hope. Everybody's got great expectations." Club members will soon be spending upwards of 30 hours a week getting their pigeons in shape. Martinez takes a deep breath and removes his keys from the ignition. "I have to warn you," he says. "All we do at these meetings is fight. We should have come wearing hard hats and bulletproof vests."

Inside, one wall is lined with pigeon transport crates and an oversize American flag. There are a few battered benches and discarded school chairs, and a soft-drink machine that dispenses cans of beer. Trophies capped with regal-looking golden pi-

EVERETT COLLECTION

Martinez "tosses" his birds on one of many daily training flights from this Brooklyn site. Although born with innate homing abilities, homers get better with practice.

geon figurines sit on a shelf beneath a water-stained drop ceiling. A few dozen men, ranging from their early 20s to their late 70s, mill around a feather-encrusted kerosene heater. Martinez, with his boyish charm and easy smile, stands out from the crowd. In his sneakers and jeans, he works the room as if running for office, slapping backs, throwing fake punches and showing off his shiny, custom-embroidered jacket depicting a gray pigeon with red feet and displaying the words "OJ Loft"—for Orlando and his brother, Jose's, racing team.

During the meeting, the racers discuss the high cost of shipping their birds. The night before each race, pigeons are dropped off at the club, then trucked overnight to a destination, say, 300 miles away, to be released the following morning. For Martinez, preparing for shipping is an all-day affair. He spends the morning monitoring winds and other weather data so he can judge his birds' nutritional needs. "For tough race days, I load them up like marathoners on fats, proteins and carbs," he says. "I'll feed them peanuts and safflower seeds. Sometimes I'll give them B-12, amino acids and brewer's yeast. If it's a short race, I'll give them plenty of corn and peas. Picture a boxing trainer. That's what I am." Two hours before shipping, he sets out clay nesting bowls and removes a partition in his rooftop coop separating cocks from hens. After an hour of motivational intimacy, the birds are separated again. "Coming home to food is a big motivator, but sex is even bigger," Martinez explains.

Today, the club's large and occasionally cranky president, John Ferraro, is trying to persuade club members to buy electronic clocks, to automate the process of determining race winners. Under existing rules, when a bird arrives home from a race, its owner takes a numbered elastic band off its ankle and puts it in a capsule that goes into a tamper-proof clock for time-coding. The system makes cheating all but impossible—a major concern given the fanaticism of the racers and the high stakes of big races. The new clocks would be even better, says Ferraro. "You put a chip on the bird, and the clock scans it as soon as the bird comes in. It even has a built-in master timer that automatically updates itself using satellites. It's clear. No mistakes, no cheating."

Twice a week, Martinez gives his birds medicine to help them breathe (top). A leg band certifies entry in the high-stakes Viola, one of the richest pigeon races.

The clocks would also eliminate many of the tedious tasks performed after the races. Because lofts are located at varying distances from a race's starting point, the first bird home isn't necessarily the winner. An aerial survey is performed on each loft, and its distance from the start is calculated. The winner is the bird with the best average speed.

A WEEK LATER, 50 PIGEON RACERS, gathered for an auction at the Triboro Club in Queens, are inspecting row upon row of caged pigeons. The crowd is a cross-section of New York: Puerto Ricans, blacks, Poles, Italians and others, all standing around, trading breeding tips and pigeon gossip. An auctioneer stands on a folding table and starts the bidding on a healthy-looking pair of blue-and-white homers. "This pair comes from Johnny Russo," he announces. "Need I say more? He flies a dynamic bird. Do I hear $50? OK, $55? $60? $70? $80? Sold for $80!"

Martinez reaches into a cage, picks up a bird and spreads one of its wings. "You always got to look at the tips of the feathers," he says. "They're like the rings in a tree. You can tell if a bird missed a day of feeding or if it didn't get enough water." He holds the bird in one hand, first inspecting its beak then its breastbone, or keel. "I'm more interested in how a bird feels in my hand and how it handles itself," he says. "He should be as curious about me as I am about him." According to Martinez, the best predictor of racing success is a bird's territoriality. A territorial bird, he says, will "overlook pain, hunger, muscle cramps—anything—to get home to its perch." Moments later, a bird in the next cage catches his eye. "I like that bird," he says. "Why? I wish I could tell you. Sometimes it's just the way they look at you."

Before he began racing homers, Martinez would go out drinking most nights. Now he's too busy with his pigeons. His choice of friends has changed too. "I find myself associating with other pigeon racers," he says. "If you're one of the best racers in New York, most people won't be impressed, but other racers are. A lot of

Joe Kowalchuk trucks pigeons to starting points up to 500 miles away. "Of course I can't have a bird in the race or place a bet," he says.

us even take our vacations together."

Martinez's first fascination with pigeons dates to his family's move from Puerto Rico to Brooklyn, when he was 4 years old. "As a kid, I always looked up and watched them flying around," he says. "I just liked being around them." As young teenagers, Martinez and Jose made a coop in their bedroom window from milk crates. "We had 16 birds," says Martinez. "They weren't homers; they were flights, which stay close to their coop. We'd let them out the window and watch them fly in circles and come back. All the kids had them. The idea was to catch another guy's bird and sell it back to him for a dollar." Martinez and his brother built their first rooftop coop in 1973 and spent most of their time protecting it from pigeon thieves, known as tappers. "When you're living in the ghetto," he says, "the hardest part is making sure no one steals your birds."

Martinez was in his 20s before he could afford his first loft of racing homers. His mentor was a Queens pet shop owner named Frank Klein, who gave Orlando and Jose their first homers. "Frank saw we had potential, that we could be contenders," says Martinez. "He taught us everything."

Klein remembers Martinez as "a nice boy, a little on the wild side. He had the interest right away, but he didn't know anything about the birds." Then, in 1994, the Martinez brothers won the Main Event for the first time. "Orlando's one of the top guns in the sport right now," says Klein. "Jose lost interest, but Orlando puts all the work in. No matter how good the birds are, if you don't take care of them, nothing happens."

BY THE END OF APRIL, MARTINEZ IS spending most of his waking hours with his pigeons. He opens his bedroom closet and climbs a makeshift ladder mounted against the wall. Poking his head through a ceiling trapdoor, he is quickly surrounded by softly cooing pigeons. The birds groom one another and peck at leftover feed as Martinez moves about, gently scooping up a pigeon to inspect its wings and carriage. "Just being around them makes me happy," he says. "The first thing I checked out when I bought this house was the view from the roof—perfect for racing."

Martinez has big plans for his coop. "I'm getting them a filtering system so their air is better than what I breathe downstairs," he says. "I'm putting in a water purification system. And I hope to put in a central vacuum system for them, which Omayra's going to kill me for because we don't even have one." All told, Martinez spends about $4,000 a year on antibiotics, vi-

Two days before the Main Event, the Bronx Homing Pigeon Club is already abuzz as Nick Cisco (in baseball cap) takes early bets.

tamins, supplements and vaccinations—enough to transform his closets into giant aviary medicine cabinets.

With all that is known about caring for pigeons, nobody knows exactly why racing homers home, though the ability has been recognized and cultivated for centuries. In the 12th century, the Caliph of Baghdad maintained a well-organized "pigeon post" complete with pigeon post offices and pigeon postmasters—an early equivalent to Airborne Express given that most travel was done by foot. The use of pigeons then spread to Western Europe, where they were used to carry such history-altering messages as the results of battles. The Flemings even used them to relay stock quotes across the English Channel from the London Exchange. At the time, a note tied to a pigeon's ankle was the fastest and most reliable means of communication. In the mid-19th century, Baron Paul Julius Reuter built his early news-gathering empire on the use of 200 message-carrying homers to bridge the telegraphic gap between Brussels and Aachen. And they were used by the U.S. Armed Forces as recently as World War II, when one pigeon, named G.I. Joe, was credited with saving the lives of more than 1,000 British soldiers who had taken the Italian town of Colvi Vecchia from the Germans but were unable by radio to call off a planned American bombing raid. G.I. Joe carried the message back to the American airbase minutes before the planes were due to take off. For his heroics, the bird was awarded a medal for gallantry by the Lord Mayor of London.

As navigators, pigeons appear to rely on a combination of directional tools. First, they apparently use the sun's position to orient themselves. A blindfolded pigeon can also find its loft, but only with difficulty. The birds' other directional device seems to be related to the earth's magnetic field. When small magnets are placed on the back of a pigeon's head to interfere with its natural magnetic sensing ability, the bird becomes disoriented, particularly if the sky is overcast. And a Belgian study has linked poor race days to disturbances in the earth's magnetic field caused by solar storms and sunspots. Cellular phone towers also appear to muddy the directional cues that pigeons rely on.

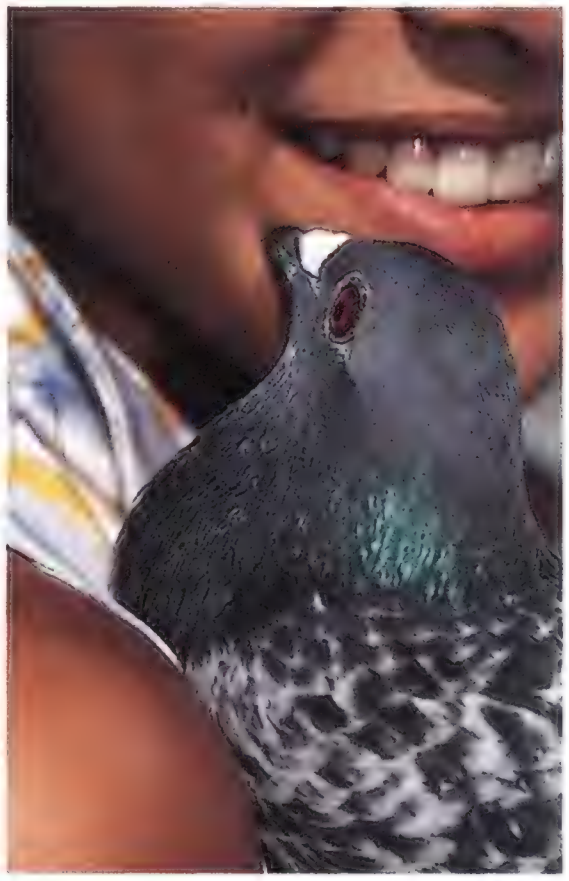
Martinez's favorite homing story involves a female bird he calls Marty, winner of many competitions. When she didn't return home from a 300-mile race a few years ago, Martinez assumed a hawk had gotten her. But two weeks later he found Marty on his doorstep. Her wing was broken. She had *walked* home.

Although born with innate abilities,

homers get better with practice, which is why Martinez is fanatical about training. It isn't uncommon for birds to take off in the wrong direction and reorient themselves in midflight. The more familiar a bird is with the terrain, the more likely it will find its way home quickly without losing time for corrections.

IT IS JULY 22, THREE MONTHS BEFORE the Main Event. Martinez pulls up to a deserted parking lot beside an abandoned factory on Staten Island's north shore. It is an ugly patch of weed-infested asphalt that looks like a good place to dispose of a body. But Martinez has other plans. While some men search for the perfect trout stream, Martinez drives around Staten Island looking for the perfect spot to accustom his pigeons to the route home to Brooklyn. He thinks this may be it. "We're exactly 10.3 air miles due west from my pigeon loft," he explains. This is the homestretch for his club's races. "When the pigeons reach this spot," he says, "they'll be tired, hungry and thirsty, and I don't want anything to make them deviate from their path home. I'm teaching them to fly a straight line. They won't even know they're doing it, they will have done it so many times."

Martinez, a graphic designer, takes the entire summer off to train his pigeons. He lives cheaply. Work, for him, is an occasional necessity but hardly a priority. "I race pigeons," he says. "That's what I do." In summer, he routinely wakes before 5 A.M. so he can get in his first toss of the day before the morning rush hour. He fits in two or three more training flights before sundown. Today, Martinez places his crates on the cracked asphalt and waits. The birds sit quietly, orienting themselves, their brains like compass needles settling on a direction. When they begin to peck one another gently, it's called "music": it means they're ready to fly. Martinez opens a little mesh door on one of his crates and releases five birds. Quickly airborne, they swoop around frantically in patterns, flying left, right, then under a set of softly humming power lines. Martinez winces, but the birds make it through the wires unharmed, regroup and swing out toward Brooklyn and home. Martinez checks his watch and waits five minutes before releasing another set of birds. He wants each pigeon to learn to lead, not just follow the pack.



Martinez's fiancée, Reyes, shares his love of pigeons, but also likes fried chicken.

Back in Brooklyn, Reyes listens to salsa and waits on the rooftop loft for the birds. Beside her rests a large net called a hoople and a bag of raw Spanish peanuts, the pigeons' favorite snack. Eleven minutes after the launch, Reyes phones Martinez with good news: the first birds have arrived, ten minutes faster than last week. In the days that follow, Martinez will release his birds from farther away, at truck stops along the New Jersey and Pennsylvania turnpikes. But he will end each day with another drive across the Verrazano Narrows Bridge to the abandoned Staten Island parking lot for yet another toss. "You can't just race pigeons," he reflects. "You might win a race, but it'll be by accident. If I win, it's not luck. I'm training them four times a day. What's lucky about that?"

BY OCTOBER 19, MARTINEZ'S TRAINING has paid off. His birds have dominated the fall races with seven first places. Tonight is shipping night for the Main Event, and the Bronx Homing Pigeon Club is swamped with people and food of all ethnic persuasions. There's rice and beans, stuffed peppers and manicotti, fried chicken and greens, kielbasa and sauerkraut. In the clubhouse garage, racers from all over the New York metropolitan area drop off their birds for shipment to Triadelphia, West Virginia, more than 350 miles away. The club's vice president inspects each bird's wings to make sure they have molted properly. Because molting uses up a lot of a bird's energy, some racers try to retard the process by keeping their birds in the dark for 16 hours or more a day. But that's cheating, so each bird's wings must pass muster before it's allowed to race. Another official seals the race clocks as club members bet on their favorite birds. In the clubhouse, the race's organizers, Joe Musto and Larry Doherty, collect fees and enter contestants.

"It's endless work, 365 days a year," pipes up Donna Musto, Joe's wife. "To be honest, I don't get it. He's always with the birds, and when he's not, they're always on his mind. We plan our vacations around them, our nights out around them. It's always pigeons, pigeons, pigeons."

Musto shoots Donna a look and asks her to "go get the picture." Donna doesn't budge. Musto gets up and

Reggie won $15,000 before Martinez retired him to the stock loft to breed future champions.

returns with a Polaroid of a pigeon standing on a pedestal, staring blankly into the camera. "Out of 2,048 birds, she comes in first!" Musto says excitedly. "First! It's something I've never done before." Musto folds his arms across his barrel chest and beams.

"I'm married 50 years," chimes in Doherty, "and I told my wife that as long as we have the blue-cheque hen upstairs, we're OK." The hen is Doherty's best breeder. "When you breed young birds, you put all your hopes in them," he says. "To breed future winners, that's an aspiration we all have—to see that bundle of 16 ounces fly home from 300 miles away just to come back to what you've been giving it. Well, it satisfies everything."

OCTOBER 21. IT IS JUST AFTER 2 P.M. and the Main Event birds are on their way home. Martinez, on his Brooklyn roof, stares at the horizon above Staten Island, which is filled with dark specks: distant planes, insects, sparrows, common pigeons known as "street rats," starlings, seagulls. Somehow Martinez can always tell which speck is one of his pigeons, yet he is feeling today's race slipping away. He tenses as a cell-phone consensus builds around a reported sighting of someone else's returning pigeon in Queens. "That's impossible!" he shouts into a phone. "Well, it's not impossible, but that bird's supersonic. I got to go." Switching to his cordless, he yells, "Nobody else has birds! Are you sure you heard right? Something's wrong here! I want a Congressional investigation!"

Dreams of winning the Main Event are fading fast. Martinez picks up a "chico"—a bird that is thrown up to help guide pigeons home once they are sighted—and scans the horizon. Back to the cell phone. "Yo, you heard? Bert & Harry got one at 2:16. I ain't kidding. Nobody else got squat. I haven't seen a feather."

Reyes is wearing her lucky maroon sweatshirt. She's dying to call out for fried chicken, but she knows the rules. No unnecessary phone calls on race day. Ten more minutes pass. Martinez tries to make sense of what's happening. "It's the Blue Ridge Mountains," he says to no one in particular. "They're tall, and it gets misty up there. Most birds don't like to cross them. They go back and forth trying to find a way around them. But some of the birds go right through."

Suddenly Martinez is silent, motionless. "*Dios mio!*" shouts Reyes. A pigeon circles above. Martinez releases the chico. His racing pigeon lands on the coop, and Martinez approaches it, whistling softly. Reyes grabs a handful of peanuts and squats under the coop entrance to snatch the elastic race band off the pigeon's ankle. Clocking is a critical element of winning. With hundreds of birds arriving at nearly the same time, every second counts.

Martinez spends hours training his birds to go right into the coop, but this time the pigeon doesn't budge. "Come on, Mami," he urges. "Come on!" The bird looks skinny and exhausted, as if it has lost some of its breast meat. It grooms itself, then looks away. Martinez is about to hemorrhage. He can't wait any longer; there is too much money and prestige at stake. He traps the pigeon with the hoople. Reyes removes the race band, places it in a metal capsule, drops it, finds it again, then sticks it in the clock, where it is timestamped. The clock reads 2:39 P.M. Martinez gets back on the phones. Six more of his birds come in. "Quality shows," he says proudly. "I bred a lot of winners this year."

But not today. Of the 790 birds in the Main Event, one of Martinez's birds will finish 23rd, and others 94th and 96th. The other 12 don't even rank. Martinez grows silent, and Reyes phones out for chicken.

"I thought I had the winners," Martinez says later. "Pigeon racing has a way of humbling you." Then he jumps to his feet and walks around the room. "I'm going to do things differently next year," he says at last, with growing animation. "I'm going to start them later and let them fly as a pack a little longer. That way they won't get bored. It's up to me to motivate them. This year they got bored. That was the problem."

This is Massachusetts-based writer Andrew D. Blechman's first story for SMITHSONIAN *and Virginia photographer Cameron Davidson's 20th.*

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LOFTY ASPIRATIONS

AND YOU THOUGHT TREE CLIMBING WAS FOR KIDS. MORE AND MORE GROWN-UPS ARE SCALING THE PLANET'S TALLEST LIVING ORGANISMS

BY JIM MORRISON

PETER JENKINS HAS CLIMBED JUST ABOUT EVERY type of large tree that grows in the United States, sometimes to lop off a limb that threatens an electrical line, other times to rescue a cat or a pet parrot or iguana or boa constrictor. A certified arborist, he once even rescued a man who had climbed into a tree after his cat. That's not to mention the three activists whom Jenkins brought back to earth after they became treebound while preventing a bulldozer from taking down an old tree.

But this particular assignment for "Treeman," as Jenkins is fondly known in certain circles, is a little different. His client wants him to hang between two giant sequoias in a grove near the edge of Sequoia National Park, like a piece of

Rappelling (down a 200-foot giant sequoia, left) remains the most dangerous aspect of the sport of tree climbing.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY LOUIE PSIHOYOS

Peter Jenkins, an arborist by trade, has turned tree climbing into sport.

Though partially paralyzed, Toshiko Hikosaka loves to climb trees.

laundry 200 feet above the ground. It might be daunting for most people, but not for Jenkins, who climbs trees for work but also for fun. Nonetheless, on this sparkling summer day, his first attempt to get up the tree is not auspicious. Giant sequoias can top 250 feet, with their lowest branches as much as 100 feet off the ground. Jenkins refuses to use leg spikes to climb up the tree for fear of injuring it; that's not the way, he believes, to treat one of the world's largest and oldest living organisms.

He pulls out a bow and threads an arrow, which is attached to a fishing line spooling from a spinning reel mounted on the bow. On his fourth shot, the arrow arcs over an immense branch and falls to earth. He uses this line and a polypropylene rope to pull his heavy three-eighths inch static climbing rope into place. He ties one end securely to the base of a nearby fir tree.

JENKINS SQUINTS IN THE AFTERNOON SUN, TRYING TO follow the black rope snaking up high above his head. He looks a little worried, but his voice has the soft-spoken authority of a man who does dangerous things routinely. "A sequoia's looks are deceptive," he says. The tree's branches are brittle, and his rope may be hanging on a pencil-thin branch or a snag that won't support his weight. With a carabiner, a small oval-shaped locking device, he attaches his harness to a metal ascender, a tool resembling a red staple gun. Attached to the rope, its teeth work like a ratchet, locking into the rope with any downward pressure, but free to move upward. This ascender is attached by a thin bungee cord to another ascender placed beneath it. Stirrups dangle from the lower ascender. Climbing is a slow two-step: Jenkins stands in the stirrups, taking his weight off the top ascender, which he then pushes 18 inches up the rope. Then he sits back in his harness, relieving the pressure on the lower ascender, which automatically advances upward, pulled by the bungee cord. Jenkins then stands and begins the process again, a motion he will repeat hundreds of times.

Suddenly, three sharp cracks interrupt the dance. Jenkins, six feet off the ground, falls unceremoniously to the forest floor. Three small branches spiral down from above. In a flash, he's on his feet, swatting at the air, which has suddenly clouded with yellow jackets. Encumbered with equipment and locked to his rope, he can't escape.

Long seconds pass before he manages to clamber uphill and away from the insects. Jenkins suffers only a single sting on his wrist. After a few slugs of a homemade molasses drink, he starts the climbing process again on the other side of the tree. Within 20 minutes, he's standing on a branch about 100 feet off the ground. He'll climb another 100 feet and rig a rope that will stretch between this sequoia and a second, 60 feet away. Jenkins will dangle from the middle of this rope 200 feet off the ground, striving to keep his video camera steady.

An equally remarkable scene emerges 100 yards up the hill beneath another sequoia, a tree so monumental that it soars high above Jenkins' position. Two helmeted men hold the limp frame of 60-year-old Toshiko Hikosaka, whose broad smile lights up her face. A rope leads from her harness, shooting upward and disappearing into the canopy. With encouragement from a team of climbers, she is about to scale the 243-foot-tall Stagg sequoia. She has trained three years for this day, working to overcome the limitations of the paralysis that has left her with only partial use of her arms and legs. Hikosaka's attempt is something of a milepost for the burgeoning recreational sport of tree climbing, an activity that its participants say celebrates the soul as well as the body. Should she reach the top, it will demonstrate that tree climbing has no boundaries, even for physically challenged individuals.

Jenkins was a natural choice to ask for help when a documentary filmmaker sought to record Hikosaka's attempt. As the founder of Tree Climbers International (TCI), a group that now boasts about 600 members dedicated to the childhood joys of going out on a limb, Jenkins is considered the father of recreational tree climbing using technical equipment. From tulip poplars in North Carolina to beeches in England to baobab trees

Many tree sleepers (such as Andy and Connie Taylor, left, 90 feet off the ground near Elk, California) report particularly vivid dreams.

ALL: LOUIE PSIHOYOS/MATRIX

During the several hours it takes to scale a tall tree (such as the "Henry" tree, a California coast redwood), climbers often note that time slows to a standstill, a phenomenon they refer to as "tree time."

Using rock-climbing technology, tree climbers rig sleeping platforms, known as portaledges, draped with mosquito netting.

in Botswana, TCI members follow the motto: "Get High—Climb Trees."

It all started, says Jenkins, during a 1978 visit to his parents' house in Dallas, when an ice storm broke limbs on trees across the city. In an instant, he made a career choice: tree surgery would enable him to make a living climbing, a sport he loved. Back in Atlanta, Jenkins married his rock-climbing skills to more conventional arborist techniques, such as double-rope climbing. "My clients would come out of their houses and would always comment on how much fun I seemed to be having up there," he says.

In 1983, he began offering free lessons two Sundays a month in a pair of 100-year-old white oaks on a sliver of land 20 minutes from downtown Atlanta. Soon, he had given the oaks names: Dianna and Nimrod. (Jenkins has already planned for his ashes to go into a hollow at the base of Nimrod.) In the past 19 years, Jenkins calculates that he's taught some 10,000 people how to climb trees, from birthday partyers and Cub Scouts to advanced climbers, to whom he has confided the tricks of "tree surfing." Jenkins' grin grows wide as he describes how a tree can become a wind-powered amusement ride on a blustery day. "White pines have the most whip," he says. "You're at the top of the tree looking out over the canopy. You can see these trees bending, the big gusts of winds coming toward you. And then, when it hits, it roars, and the ride begins."

One person whom Jenkins turned on to tree climbing was John Gathright, the organizer of the Japanese documentary film expedition. Gathright, a newspaper columnist and a commentator for Japanese television, founded a tree-climbing school in Japan and built a livable tree house out of soy sauce barrels, on the grounds of a Buddhist temple in Seto, Japan. It was there, three years ago, that he got to know Toshiko Hikosaka. "She was a frail woman in a motorized wheelchair," he says, "with only limited movement in her arms." She told him that she used to dream about walking but no longer did so. In a moment of emotional empathy, he assured her, "I promise that you can climb a tree."

Over the next three years, not only did Hikosaka begin climbing trees, but her improved body strength enabled her to dream even bigger dreams. She set her sights on spending the night in the crown of the giant Stagg sequoia, a notion that gave even Gathright pause.

The night before her climb, Hikosaka tells me that people look down on her when she's in her wheelchair. High in a tree, she says, she can look down on *them*. The next day, Gathright helps carry her to the base of the tree. After donning her gear, she ascends, inch by inch, with Gathright climbing alongside, steadying her, while a cameraman shoots the scene from above.

A little more than four hours later, Gathright and a tired but triumphant Hikosaka reach the top, and Jenkins hears the cheers of the climbers floating out of the canopy over the hillside. "I marvel at Hikosaka's determination," he says. Aloft, Hikosaka and Gathright eat rice balls she brought all the way from Japan and settle down for the night. "I could live here my whole life and never come down," she says.

Over the years, recreational tree climbing has evolved, borrowing tools and techniques from arborists, cavers, rock climbers and archers. Today, climbers strive to leave all trees unharmed, doing most of their climbing not on the tree but on a rope. Gaffs, the leg spikes used by telephone repairmen, are generally shunned. Ropes are placed carefully so they don't cut into the crotches of branches. To prevent damage, straps or pieces of flexible pipe, known as cambium savers, go over the tops of the branches of most trees, especially thin-skinned varieties such as sycamores, beeches and maples. The locations of favorite trees are carefully guarded to prevent their overuse. "You can kill a tree with too many climbers using the wrong equipment and climbing techniques," says Jenkins.

TCI gained nationwide attention in the late 1980s when essayist and author Robert Fulghum declared himself a dues-paying member of TCI in his book *It Was on Fire When I Lay Down on It*. Climbers are fond of quoting Fulghum's Zen-like pronouncement that tree climbing "is an attitude, a place to be, rather than something to do." Indeed, to most enthusiasts, how high you climb is not important. "A lot of people assume that it's a thrill sport or a test of physical athleticism, but it's really not," says Sophia Sparks, whose company, New Tribe, manufactures specialized tree-climbing gear. "There is certainly a huge thrill to be up in some of the tallest, oldest trees, but you can get the same rich, warm feeling from even your backyard apple tree."

These days, Sparks and her partner, Tom Ness, have trouble keeping up with orders. The company's signature item is the Treeboat, a hammock designed for spending the night suspended from the treetops (cost: $115). Mosquito netting, rainfly, panniers for equipment, and a blanket-for-two are optional extras.

The development of technical tree-climbing equipment has benefited biologists who study the canopy, which, they believe, is one of the last terrestrial frontiers on earth and may contain nearly half of all life on the planet. Until fairly recently, the canopy had been largely inaccessible to researchers, but, aided by the new gear, scientists such as Alaska Pacific University's Roman Dial have developed ways of climbing from tree to tree without returning to the ground. Dial envisions spending ten consecutive days in the canopy, taking measurements through half a mile of treetops.

Not everyone is sanguine. "Many canopy scientists," says Steve Sillett, an associate professor at Humboldt State University in Arcata, California, "are very concerned that recreational tree climbing could have negative impacts on sensitive communities of plants and animals that live in the canopy." And Geoffrey "Jess" Parker of the Smithsonian Environmental Research Center worries that recreational climbers "will succumb to Mount Everest syndrome: needing to climb the tallest, oldest trees and ruin the canopy habitats before the scientists have a chance to investigate them."

In fact, giant sequoias—most of which are on government land, where climbing them is prohibited—are less vulnerable to damage from tree climbing than are other old-growth trees: Douglas firs, native to the forests of the Pacific Northwest, for example, wear moss mats on their branches, which themselves harbor a great diversity of life, are extremely slow growing, and are quite easy to dislodge.

At 243 feet tall and probably close to 2,000 years old,

Weather can create high art in the canopy of a giant sequoia, such as in the Window Tree (right) sculpted by lightning and fire.

the Stagg sequoia grows on private property. (The owners gave permission for the members of the film expedition to climb it.) Genevieve Summers, one of the safety chiefs on the film and owner of the tree climbing company Dancing with Trees, agrees to take me to the top.

I PULL MYSELF UP THE ROPE WITH HARD jerky movements, and I'm out of breath in moments. Summers, on the other hand, seems to glide up the rope, impervious to gravity. After a while, I settle into a slow but surer pace and even begin to enjoy the view and fresh breeze. At 100 feet off the ground, Summers asks if I want to do some tree dancing. Before I have a chance to answer, she pushes off from the trunk, whirling like a marionette cut from all but one string. I join her, and our childlike cries of "whee" change in pitch as we swing.

As we climb higher, the spongy, two-foot-thick bark, which is cinnamon in color, changes to a gray, auburn and tan veneer that is extremely hard. I find myself inexpressibly moved by the majesty of the giant sequoias, which conservationist John Muir described a hundred years ago as "lonely, silent, serene, with a physiognomy almost godlike."

After 90 minutes of climbing, we reach our "room" for the night, a gnarled, sculptural cathedral of deadwood, created, perhaps, by a lightning strike or a windstorm. With a haul line, we pull up our sleeping bags and gear and stow them in the cathedral. Then, with the sun glowing golden on the horizon, I join Summers on a thick branch as we read from *The Attentive Heart: Conversations with Trees*, essays by environmentalist Stephanie Kaza: "All night the trees have been conversing under the full moon, weaving me into their stories, capturing my dreams with their leaning limbs and generous trunks. Breathing together as I slept, as they rested, we danced quietly in the summer night."

A gust of wind catches the pages, and Summers loses her place, so we sit quietly, listening only to the breeze murmuring through the needles, the giant tree occasionally groaning softly beneath us as the sun dies behind the ridge. Unlike the mountains I've climbed, this thing is alive. It moves gently, slowly, solemnly in the wind.

Later, we eat peanut butter and jelly sandwiches in the surreal light of our headlamps. We turn in, locked to our ropes, a comforting, if uncomfortable, requirement. Between snatches of sleep, I watch the night sky go from a milky lavender to matte black. Sometime in the night the wind kicks up, stirring up latent anxieties, but the morning is clear and still, punctuated only by a lone yellow jacket that has somehow found its way to our perch.

To return to the ground, we clip into a rappelling device called a rack, which supplies friction to the rope, slowing our descent. We slip slowly through the crown of branches. I linger at 100 feet to enjoy the view of the valley, then again at 50 feet, for one last pendulous dance.

When I reach the ground, I stop for one last look back at the tree's monumental trunk. For the first time I fully understand Jenkins' reaction to the cutting down of Georgia's largest American beech tree to make way for an office complex. "It was like losing an elderly friend," he had said, "who used to wrap her arms around me."

Author Jim Morrison climbed pine trees as a child in Pennsylvania. Louie Psihoyos is the author and photographer of Hunting Dinosaurs.

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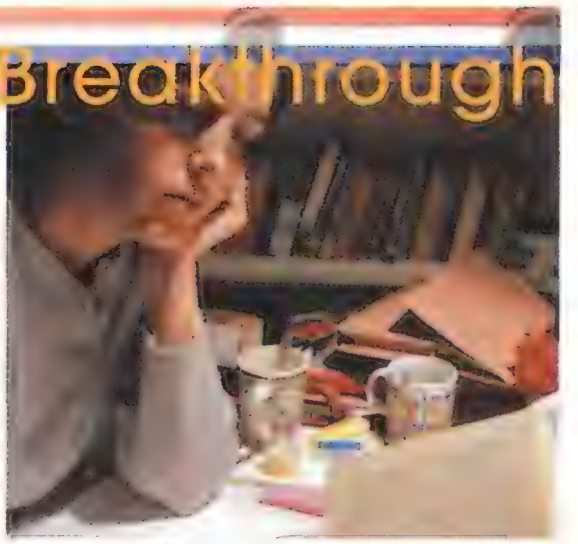

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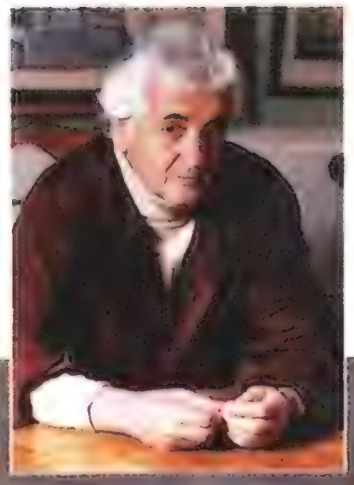


CHEEKY

HOUSEWIVES WITH AMERICAN SAILORS GLASGOW 1961

The United States Navy established a base in Holy Loch, near Glasgow, to be able to refit its nuclear-powered submarines with Polaris nuclear missiles in Europe rather than bring the subs home. Not everyone was happy about the base, Benson remembers, but "the Glasgow housewives had no qualms about welcoming the sailors to their shores."

CHARMER

Adapted from *Harry Benson: Fifty Years in Pictures*, Harry N. Abrams, Inc., November 2001

FOR HALF A CENTURY, PHOTOGRAPHER HARRY BENSON HAS BEEN TALKING HIS WAY TO THE TOP OF HIS GAME

BY SEAN CALLAHAN

IF YOU LOOK CLOSELY AT THE NEWSreels showing the Beatles' 1964 arrival at New York's JFK airport, a "fifth Beatle" follows the Fab Four out of the airplane. He is distinguished not by the mop top of his colleagues but by a '50s teddy boy haircut and a camera around his neck. Photographer Harry Benson pauses at the top of the stairs surveying the scene. Every time I see this clip I imagine he's looking for the Time & Life Building.

Life magazine had been in Harry Benson's sights for all the years he fought his way to the front of London's Fleet Street rat pack. For that Beatles tour, he was on assignment for the London *Daily Express*, but when the rock group returned to England, he stayed in the United States.

It took another four years before he got his first *Life* assignment: a story about mothers in a small Nebraska town protesting the sexual content of movies. Persistence, enthusiasm and a willingness to take anything thrown his way led to more work from the magazine. His beguiling charm—effective not just on assignment editors but on his subjects as well—proved invaluable with people like the notoriously aloof Johnny Carson. By the end of 1971, *Life*'s editors were astonished to realize that Benson—a freelancer—had published more pages than many of the magazine's high-profile staff photographers.

The next year (the weekly *Life*'s last) they sent him to Iceland to shoot the World Chess Championships. Enfant terrible Bobby Fischer, who was even then behaving erratically, was challenging Soviet Boris Spassky in what was one of those occasional symbolic East versus West showdowns of the Cold War.

Benson got to spend the summer in Reykjavik with Fischer. And a large contingent of the world press.

Photographing an international chess match is about as visual as a U.N. treaty debate. All aspects of the venue down to the chairs and lighting are the result of laborious negotiations. The participants—brooding eccentrics, both—were held in isolation by their handlers. And photographers were confined to a gallery where they were presented with the same dreary picture of two men staring at a game board for hours on end.

Within these stultifying confines, Benson's genius blossomed. His contact sheets showed Fischer in his private quarters. Fischer getting fitted for a new suit. Fischer brooding on the deck of a private cruiser. Fischer in a pasture being nuzzled by ponies! And then, in came the rolls of Spassky, including one improbable picture of him working out moves on a foldup chess set on top of a rock in the middle of a field of moss-covered lava boulders.

In an event that was a nonevent photographically, Benson had not only gotten behind the scenes but had successfully invaded both warring camps to produce lively, telling and exclusive pictures. The depth of his involvement became clear when, after visiting with Spassky, Benson was the one to tell Fischer that Spassky would concede the tournament the next day. "In situations like this, there's usually one friend in the enemy camp," Benson recalled years later. "I thought, it might as well be me."

Some other photographers may have the same or better command of their equipment, quick reflexes and an eye for composition. What sets Benson apart is his uncanny ability to quickly size up his subjects and then use his wits to get them into a situation where they reveal themselves in a storytelling photograph.

Until the emergence of Harry Benson's pictures in

BOBBY FISCHER (ABOVE) AND BORIS SPASSKY (BELOW) **ICELAND** 1972

Fischer became the first American World Chess Champion in 1972 when he beat Boris Spassky in Reykjavik. He lost his title in 1975 for refusing to play Soviet champion Anatoly Karpov and was indicted in 1992 for violating U.S. sanctions by playing Spassky in Serbia. This past September, Fischer, living in Japan, told a Philippine radio station he supported the terrorist attacks on the United States.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC MAY 1965

While covering the outbreak of a civil war that would result in the adoption of a new constitution in 1966, Benson "was captured by both sides in one day," he recalls. First, rebels pointed guns into the car he was in and labeled him an American spy; after the rebels released him, police searched him at gunpoint trying to find out what he had learned from the opposition.

PRESIDENT AND MRS. RONALD REAGAN

THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C. 1985

At the end of a photo shoot in the Map Room, Benson asked the couple "for a Hollywood ending." They obliged.

ALEKSANDR SOLZHENITSYN

CAVENDISH, VERMONT 1981

What did the Russian author like about the United States? "[He] told me the air was free in America," Benson recalls.

JOHN LENNON CHICAGO 1966

After John Lennon declared that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus, people burned the band's records and disc jockeys refused to play Beatles music. "Why did I open my big mouth, why did I do it?" a tearful Lennon asked Benson. "I didn't mean it," he added.

American magazines (first at *Life* and then at *People*, *New York* and *Vanity Fair*, among others), this style of imagery had been largely absent from mainstream photojournalism in the United States. What had pervaded *Life* and other "serious" picture magazines since the 1950s was a kind of reverential approach to a subject, typified by the work of W. Eugene Smith; the story was told in a series of dramatic images artfully arranged over several pages with text blocks and captions in what was known as the picture essay. Many of its practitioners thought this "concerned photography" could change the world.

By comparison, Benson's photographs were irreverent, gritty, casual and stagy—sometimes outrageously so. They told the story in a single image usually played large, dictating the headline and bending the writer's narrative around it. As Benson's success grew, other photographers, who had first disdained his approach, began to adopt it. *People* magazine, which was launched in 1974, became his showcase (he shot its third cover) for a kind of quick-hit, cheeky, illustrative photojournalism.

During his formative years on Fleet Street in postwar Britain, there were ten or more daily papers racing to cover the same story. Because of an efficient rail system, many of the London papers were national newspapers as well, so their readership exceeded that of all but the largest American dailies.

In this cauldron of competition a photographer needed agility, persistence and a badgerlike cunning to survive. There was no place for artifice; no time for permissions (better to beg forgiveness later, after the paper had gone to press). With a pack chasing every story, the successful photographer was the one who got there first, and when that was not possible, the one who managed to get something different. And if that meant convincing an apprehensive World Chess Champion to sit in a field of lava boulders on a rainy day outside of Reykjavik, that's what you did.

Sean Callahan was a reporter and picture editor at Life *and was the founding editor of* American Photographer.

PRINCESS CAROLINE OF MONACO MONTE CARLO 1986
After the death of Princess Grace, her daughter Caroline took over many of her mother's duties, including a favorite—patronage of the Royal Ballet of Monaco. Caroline still visits occasionally to meet students and lead a class.

WENDY BENSON CONEY ISLAND, NEW YORK CITY 1975
Benson's then 2-year-old daughter makes a beeline for a hot dog stand as the photographer's wife, Gigi, tries to catch her. The Bensons used to tell Wendy they were headed for Disney World when they took her to Coney Island.

Up in the sky!

It's a bird!

LOOK!

...It's a planet! It's a . . .

BY DAVID HOLZMAN

YOU MIGHT CALL PLUTO THE BLACK sheep of the planet family. Or, its favorite child. Of late, the solar system's smallest planet is experiencing something of an identity crisis as it orbits at the center of an impassioned debate. A handful of planetary scientists insist that Pluto should be expelled from the family of planets. "It's merely a large comet," says Brian Marsden of the Smithsonian Astrophysical Observatory at Harvard University, succinctly expressing the demotion view.

But other astronomers insist that a planet is exactly what Pluto is. "It's a planet, and always has been," says Alan Stern, director of the Southwest Research Institute's Department of Space Studies. To confuse matters even more, many planetary scientists claim that there are other planets in our solar system that no one's been counting.

One fact is indisputable: Pluto has always been the odd planet out. It's the faintest planet, impossible to see with the naked eye—or with most telescopes. And while the other eight commonly recognized planets fall into two clear categories—four rocky, terrestrial bodies (Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars), and four gas giants (Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune)—Pluto stands alone: an ice ball rich in frozen water and nitrogen.

very large ball of ice!

(It's Pluto, with its moon, Charon)

Percival Lowell began the search for Planet X (later dubbed Pluto) as early as 1905.

Clyde Tombaugh discovered the new planet in 1930 by using Lowell's observatory.

That's not all: its siblings all circle the Sun on the same plane, like the tracks of a giant LP suspended in the firmament. Pluto's orbit, however, tilts 17 degrees from the plane of the solar system. And it is so far from round that Pluto crosses Neptune's orbit. For 20 years out of its 248-year cycle, Pluto is closer to the Sun than Neptune.

Pluto is also downright puny, with a mass thousands of times smaller than that of most of the other planets, dwarfed even by our own modest-sized moon. If the giant Jovian satellites Ganymede and Callisto were planets, Pluto would make either of them a credible moon. (Indeed, if they orbited the Sun rather than Jupiter, each would make a more convincing planet than Pluto.) But despite the many ways in which Pluto disappoints as a planet, demoting it to comethood would be a major and, many think, wrong step to take—if only because it would confuse matters for schoolchildren, who (given the state of this debate) might need to have their textbooks revised every year or two.

Confusion has plagued Pluto—even its discovery was the result of a mistake.

More important, the debate underscores the strangely unsettling fact that astronomers have great trouble defining the term "planet." Ever since early humans first noticed bright objects wandering among the fixed stars, "planets" have been more or less taken for granted, as seemingly concrete and definite as anything in this universe. But the more we learn about the universe, the less definite everything becomes. The arguments over Pluto's planetary status may seem merely semantic, but they reflect groundbreaking thinking about our solar system, how it developed and the range of objects that call it home.

At nearly three billion miles from the Sun, Pluto represents a new frontier, the only official planet not yet visited by a probe. At the outside edge of the Hubble Space Telescope's resolution capability, Pluto remains a blurry image at best. But that is changing. NASA announced last fall that the agency had received preliminary funding from Congress to design and build a probe that will fly to Pluto and its moon, Charon.

Confusion has plagued Pluto from the outset. Its very discovery was the result of a mistake. Nineteenth-century astronomers had observed "squiggles" in the orbits of Uranus and Neptune—wrongly, it turns out—as if a large planet, then predicted to be six times the mass of Earth, were tugging them off their predicted courses. Already obsessed with canals that he believed crisscrossed the Martian landscape, Percival Lowell, a wealthy Bostonian whose brother, Abbott Lawrence Lowell, was president of Harvard University, seized upon the prospect of a planetary frontier beyond Neptune. After building Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona, he sponsored a search for Planet X, as he called it. It was at the Flagstaff observatory, 14 years after Lowell's death, that a young self-taught astronomer named Clyde Tombaugh would first detect the ice planet.

No other planet had been discovered by an American, so great fanfare greeted the announcement in the United States. Like all planets except our own (which probably got its name from the Old English word for soil), Pluto derived its name from a god of classical antiquity. It commemorated both the Greek god of the underworld and Percival Lowell himself, as his initials are the first two letters of the new planet's name. Even Walt Disney got into the act. In 1931 he added to the hullabaloo by renaming his lovable, lop-eared dog character after the new discovery.

On the basis of its extraordinary brightness, astronomers initially extrapolated that Pluto was Earth-size, about 8,000 miles in diameter. They had no way of knowing that it was the ice on Pluto's surface, not its size, that made it reflect so much light. Estimates of Pluto's size diminished dramatically in the decades that followed, as astronomers used increasingly sophisticated telescopes to measure it. (Still, nearly 65 years would pass before astronomers, using the Hubble Space Telescope, saw Pluto not as just a one-dimensional point but as a two-dimensional disk.) Pluto was further downsized with the 1978 discovery that the images astronomers had been measur-

On Pluto's closest approach to the Sun (here envisioned by artist Don Dixon), the planet's thick covering of frozen, snowlike nitrogen may begin to thaw, releasing gases and creating an atmosphere.

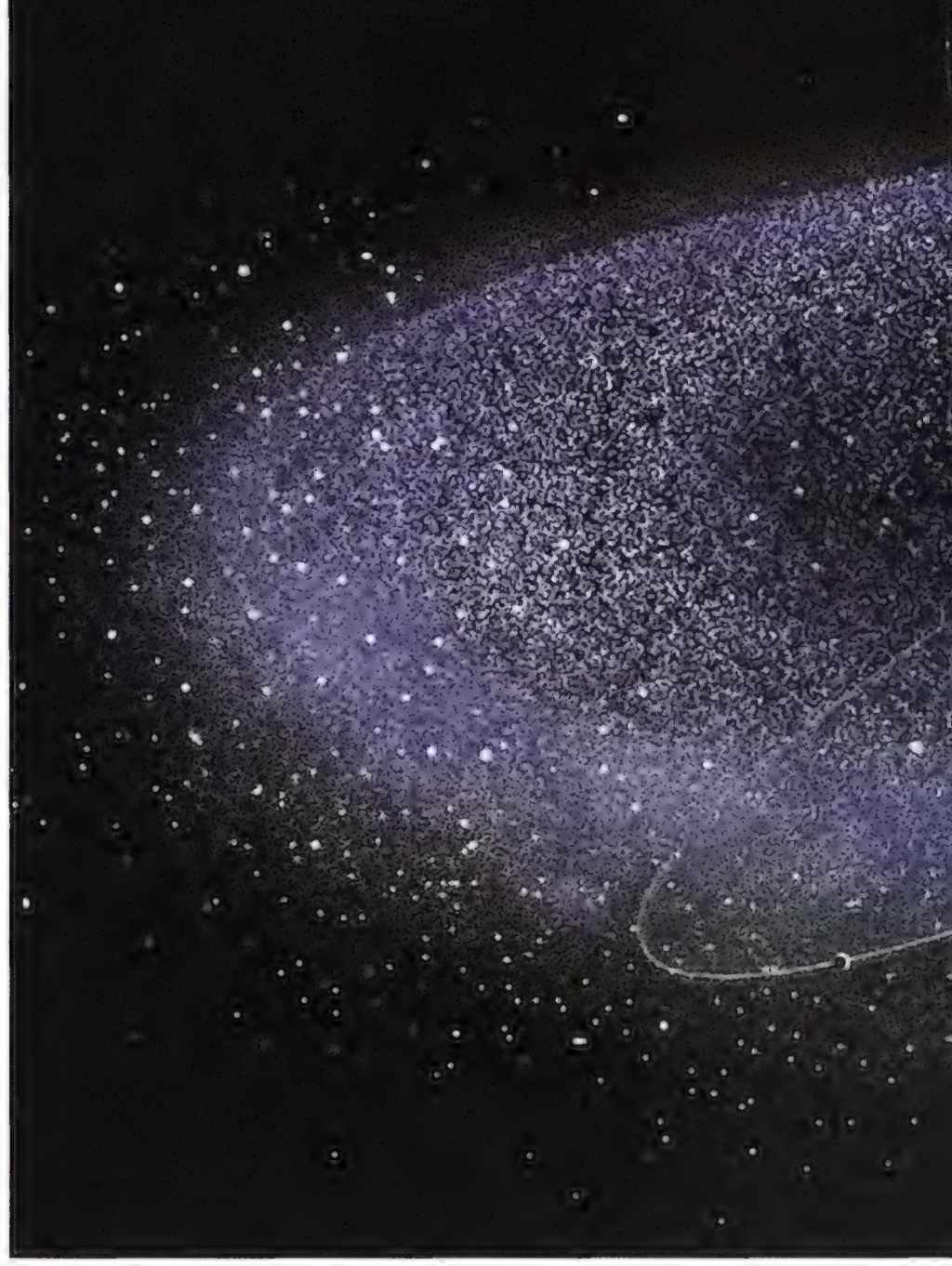
BETTMANN/CORBIS (2); PP. 68, 69 LYNETTE R. COOK; P. 71 DON DIXON

ing also included Pluto's large moon, Charon, which they named for the mythical figure who ferries the dead across the River Styx. Mocked as "the incredible shrinking planet," Pluto had some wags predicting that it would disappear entirely by the early 1980s.

The tiny planet received more attention when, in 1992, Dave Jewitt of the University of Hawaii and his former graduate student Jane Luu made a startling discovery. They found yet another icy planetary body, an object much smaller than any planet, orbiting beyond Neptune. Soon hundreds of these orbiting bodies were discovered, forming a band much like the Asteroid Belt between Mars and Jupiter but more extensive, and made up of dust and ice, like comets, rather than rock and metal, like asteroids. They were named Kuiper Belt Objects (KBOs), in honor of astronomer Gerald Kuiper, who had predicted their existence several decades before. Today, planetary scientists believe that some KBOs may be larger than Pluto. In fact, last summer astronomers from Lowell Observatory, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Arizona's Large Binocular Telescope Observatory found a KBO larger than Pluto's moon. Planetary scientists tend to agree that Pluto is a very large KBO. The question is what that says about Pluto's planetary status.

"Pluto was unique until we found all these other bodies orbiting out beyond Neptune," says the Smithsonian's Brian Marsden. "Now Pluto's existence makes sense, but if Pluto is a planet, so, too, are the larger asteroids and KBOs, which means that Pluto is no longer the ninth planet."

So what is Pluto: planet, comet or KBO? It's largely a matter of definition. After years of debate, the International Astronomical Union (IAU) agreed in 1998 that a planet must orbit the Sun (and not another planet, thereby ruling out moons) and be sufficiently large to have been made a spheroid by its own gravity. Pluto passes on both counts. But some already-known asteroids would make the grade



Pluto's long and tilted elliptical orbit, at odds with the orbit of every other planet, extends out into the recently discovered Kuiper Belt (pictured in blue), a field of many thousand icy celestial objects.

by those criteria—as, perhaps, might large KBOs like the one discovered last summer.

Ceres, an asteroid 480 miles in diameter, was classified as a planet after it was discovered January 1, 1800. As astronomers found more asteroids, however, they concluded that Ceres was merely a large example of this diminutive lot and reclassified it as an asteroid. (Pluto, too, would have been denied planetary membership, anti-Pluto partisans say, had astronomers recognized it for the leader of a band of rocky snowballs that it is.) But by the IAU definition of a planet, Ceres is also a planet.

Astronomer Hal Levison of the Southwest Research Institute has proposed that the defining feature of a planet should be its ability to sweep its orbital pathway clear of other celestial objects. When the solar system was young, he explains, it was filled with all sorts of detritus left over from the formation of the Sun. Little by little, the force of gravity turned this protoplanetary debris into discrete objects. Contenders for planethood were constantly colliding. The largest won those encounters, often annexing the smaller bodies' material. Many of the smaller bodies that escaped annexation found themselves in loosely clustered rings orbiting the Sun. Others were flung to the outer reaches of the solar system.

Eventually, says Levison, the objects that he would consider planets were able to clear their orbital paths. With the discovery of thousands of icy objects in the Kuiper Belt, and Pluto in the midst of them, no one can any longer plausibly argue that Pluto's gravity has cleared its orbital path. So, under this definition, Pluto fails the planet test. (But so might Mercury, Levison adds, because had there ever been clutter in its path, the tiny planet would probably not have been able to clear it.)

If Pluto is not a planet, says Mark Sykes, an astronomer at the University of Arizona, then it is a most unusual comet. Like seven of the nine planets, Pluto has at least one moon (Mercury and Venus do not), and is one of eight that have atmospheres (Mercury—an increasingly suspect "planet" at this point—does not).

Pluto's atmosphere is mostly nitrogen, like Earth's, but is as thin at ground level as Earth's is 55 miles up. Scientists believe that while Pluto's atmosphere is dissipating into the cosmos because of low gravity, it is being replenished by a reservoir of solid nitrogen on the surface.

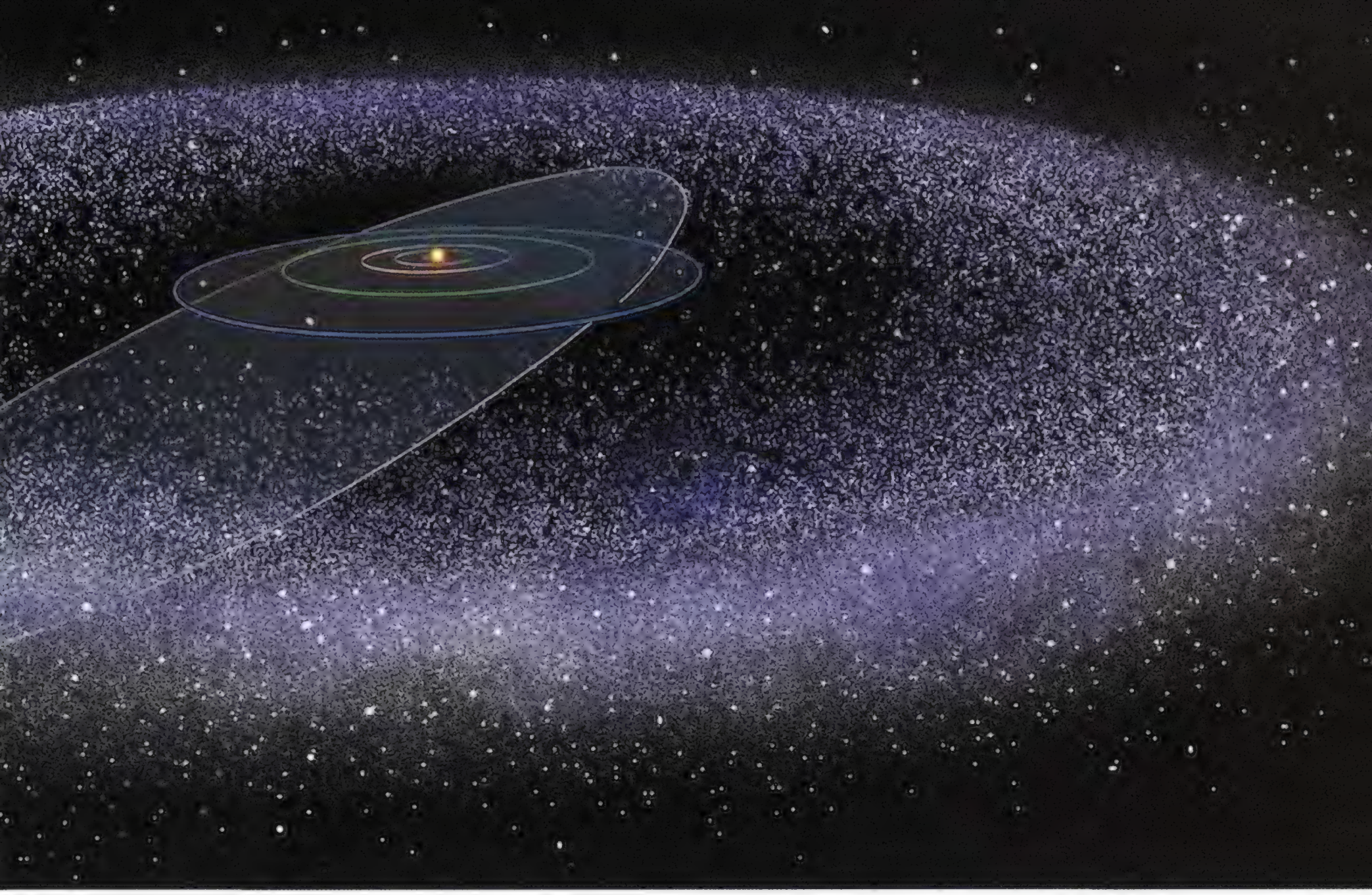
Pluto's atmosphere suggests one more thing it may have in common with the other planets: differentiation. Like the other eight, says Sykes, Pluto seems to have a core and a mantle. As planets grew in the free-for-all characterizing the earliest days of the solar system, collisions and the radioactivity of rocks created huge amounts of heat. Interiors became molten. Under the pull of gravity, heavier matter sank to the center, and lighter materials, such as Earth's silicates (think sand)—or Pluto's water and nitrogen ice—rose to the surface, with the lightest components rising to create an atmosphere.

Under the present definition, some large asteroids pass the planet test.

The problem with differentiation as a defining characteristic—or with almost any definition, in fact—is that what's true for the planets is often true for certain asteroids or comets as well. Says Levison: "You can't really come up with a physically meaningful definition of a planet that includes nine planets and only nine planets."

"We know that planets and comets are formed the same

DON DIXON



way, by agglomeration of dust particles, similar to building a snowman," says Geoffrey Marcy of the University of California at Berkeley. "So there is a continuum from the smallest comets to the largest solid planets. The dividing line between comets and planets is as joyously blurred as that between jazz and blues."

One organization has already demoted Pluto. The planetarium at New York's American Museum of Natural History took Pluto out of its planet lineup when it opened its new facility in February 2000. "Pluto," says Neil deGrasse Tyson, director of AMNH's Rose Center for Earth and Space, "should assume its rightful status as the king of the Kuiper Belt of comets."

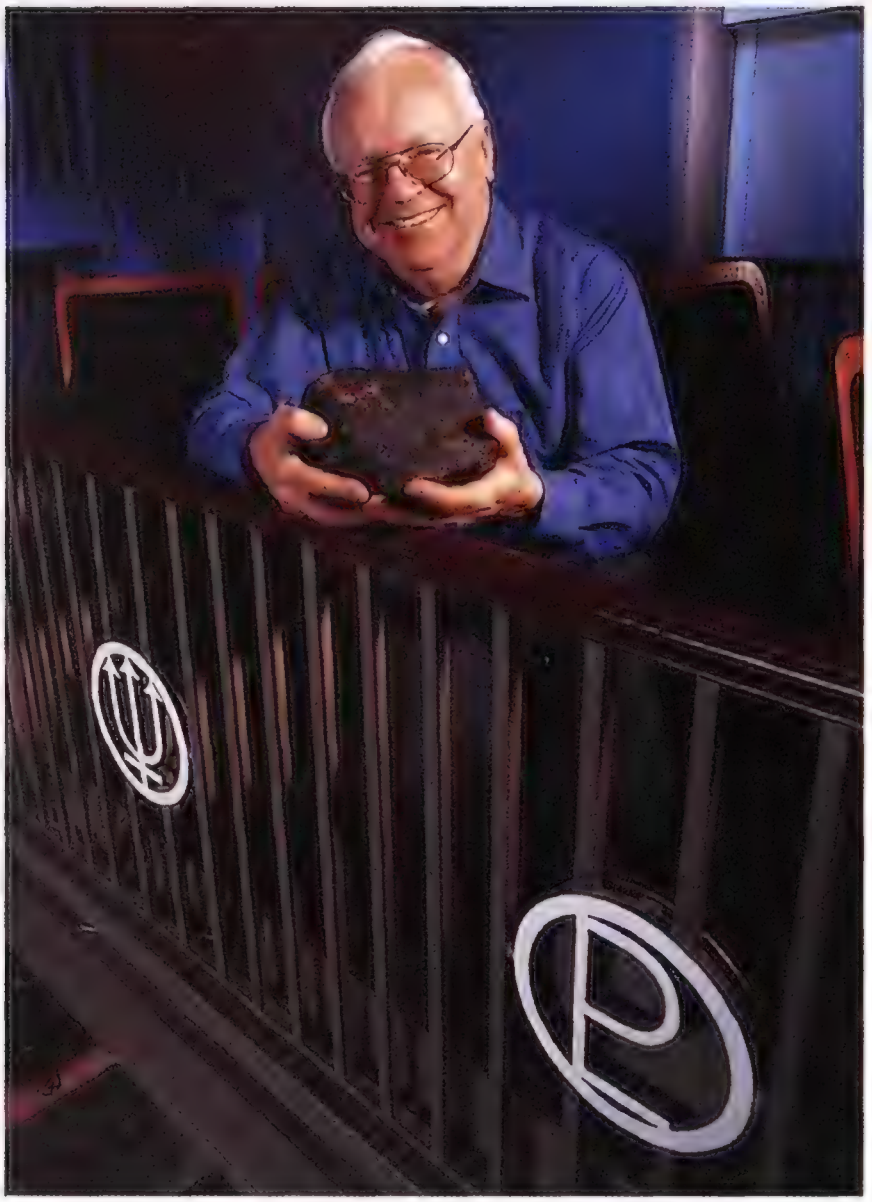
For his part, astronomer Alan Stern, at the Southwest Research Institute, says he has become exasperated by the anti-planet argument. As the principal investigator of the probe to Pluto, he is hardly disinterested. But a majority of planetary scientists seem to take his side: Pluto is a planet.

"Most planetary scientists believe that there are actually even more planets like Pluto—ice dwarfs, they're called," adds Stern. "We just haven't detected them yet." The more we know about the outer solar system, the mission leader suggests, the better we'll understand the system as a whole.

If funding continues and all goes according to schedule, the 1,000-pound nuclear-powered New Horizons spacecraft will launch in January 2006. After whizzing by Jupiter, the craft will use the largest planet's immense gravitational pull to slingshot itself to speeds of up to 22,000 miles per hour, bringing it to Pluto's door within ten years. The probe will carry a 22-pound suite of instruments, containing two telescopes, two spectrometers—one for ultraviolet and one for infrared light—and six cameras.

Time is of the essence. In 1989, Pluto began heading away from the Sun, toward the cold, far reaches of its long elliptical orbit. Many scientists believe that for about four-fifths of Pluto's orbit—or some 200 years—the nitrogen from its atmosphere freezes, lying on the planet's icy surface as an added layer of snow or frost. Only when Pluto makes its closest approach to the Sun—for a few decades at a time—would it warm enough for nitrogen to vaporize and create an atmosphere. If those scientists are right, a short window of opportunity is rapidly coming to a close. That's put pressure on NASA to launch quickly while there's still atmosphere to study.

"The mission will bring together at least three important threads of research," says Stern. First, there is the chance to get up close and personal with Pluto and its moon, Charon—a pair that some scientists are coming to think of as a double planet, because the center of the gravitational bond lies between them, rather than deep within the larger body. Stern says he's excited about the opportunity to examine an ice dwarf, the planetary cat-



The Smithsonian's Brian Marsden (left) believes that Pluto, like the meteorite he holds in his hands, more closely resembles a comet than a planet. A NASA-funded team headed by Alan Stern (right) plans for the New Horizons probe to reach Pluto and beyond by 2016.

egory that Pluto has so far occupied exclusively, but which is expected to grow as more large KBOs are identified. And finally, there is the exploration of a number of the Kuiper Belt Objects themselves.

"While Pluto is getting top billing now," says Stern, "I think the Kuiper Belt Objects will soon get equal billing." Those distant icy objects, he says, are thought to consist of material left over from the creation of the solar system and could provide extraordinary insights into its birth. "It will be the equivalent of an archaeological dig into the history of the early solar system," he adds. Because KBOs have never come close to the Sun, the ice on their surfaces has never entirely disappeared. This ice contains not only nitrogen but also carbon, oxygen and hydrogen. From this same primordial mix, the entire solar system is thought to have emerged, including life on Earth.

The orbits of the KBOs may offer their own clues about the origins of the planets. The Kuiper Belt, says Levison, "looks like something picked up the solar system and shook it really hard. The orbits are all over the place." Only 4 percent of the KBOs have orbits as elliptical and tilted from the plane of the other planets as Pluto's; the rest are even more out of whack. According to Renu Malhotra of the University of Arizona, their irregularities may provide evidence that the outer, gas-giant planets migrated to their present orbits from points closer to the Sun. She suggests that the expanding orbits of the gas giants, particularly Neptune, would have swept away smaller objects and thrown them into highly elliptical, irregular orbits—like those of Pluto and the other KBOs.

At the same time, our expanding understanding may also soon sweep away the current, quaint notion of nine planets orbiting the Sun. "I can't tell you that in 50 or 100 years our definition of 'planet' won't have to be tweaked," says Stern. Or that in far less time, "there won't be so many [planets] that we don't bother teaching all their names to fifth- and sixth-graders in school."

In the meantime, Stern and others hope to unmask the mysteries of lonely Pluto, and its icy Kuiper Belt relatives, when NASA's New Horizons spacecraft reaches the outer solar system—if all goes according to plan—in 2016. If past experience is a guide, what we learn will overturn a convention or two. Flybys of planets and their moons have often delivered the unexpected, from (in the case of Jupiter's moons) the oceans of Europa and the volcanoes of Io to the heavily cratered surface of dead Callisto. Planet or not, Pluto will undoubtedly continue to surprise us.

David Holzman wrote about dung beetles in the June 1997 issue.

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41	11.81	11.46	20.34	19.46	34.56	32.81	63.00	59.50
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48	14.96	13.56	28.21	24.71	50.31	43.31	94.50	80.50
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55	21.78	17.32	45.28	34.12	84.43	62.12	162.75	118.12
56	23.18	18.11	48.78	36.09	91.43	66.06	176.75	126.00
57	24.67	18.98	52.50	38.28	98.87	70.43	191.62	134.75
58	26.42	20.03	56.87	40.90	107.62	75.68	209.12	145.25
59	28.61	21.26	62.34	43.96	118.56	81.81	231.00	157.50
60	31.50	22.75	69.56	47.68	133.00	89.25	259.87	172.37
61	35.08	24.41	78.53	51.84	150.93	97.56	295.75	189.00
62	39.11	26.16	88.59	56.21	171.06	106.31	336.00	206.50
63	43.75	28.17	100.18	61.25	194.25	116.37	382.37	226.62
64	49.00	30.88	113.31	68.03	220.50	129.93	434.87	253.75
65	54.95	34.38	128.18	76.78	250.25	147.43	494.37	288.75
66	61.16	38.67	143.71	87.50	281.31	168.87	556.50	331.62
67	67.81	43.66	160.34	99.96	314.56	193.81	623.00	381.50
68	75.25	49.26	178.93	113.96	351.75	221.81	697.37	437.50
69	83.82	55.65	200.37	129.93	394.62	253.75	783.12	501.37
70	93.97	62.82	225.75	147.87	445.37	289.62	884.62	573.12
71	105.43	70.61	254.40	167.34	502.68	328.56	999.25	651.00
72	117.95	79.18	285.68	188.78	565.25	371.43	1124.37	736.75
73	131.95	88.46	320.68	211.96	635.25	417.81	1264.37	829.50
74	147.78	98.43	360.28	236.90	714.43	467.68	1422.75	929.25
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HOME PHONE ( ) _____ WORK PHONE ( ) _____

BENEFICIARY _____ AGE _____

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AMT. OF INS. DESIRED _____ ❑ TOBACCO ❑ NON-TOBACCO

Comments: _____

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LAC-010198 M2-B001-GALIC-ART (Smithsonian) 03/02

NEW ROUTES TO OLD ROOTS

TWENTY-FIVE YEARS AFTER ALEX HALEY'S BEST-SELLER TOPPED THE CHARTS, MILLIONS OF AMERICANS ARE USING HIGH-TECH TOOLS TO FIND THEIR ANCESTORS

IT'S 7:20 ON AN OCTOBER MORNING IN SALT LAKE CITY, AND 53 people are already lined up outside a building on West Temple Street, burdened with boxes and wheeled luggage. "It's terrific, just terrific," says a woman in line about the delights awaiting her inside. For the building is the Family History Library, the world's largest collection of genealogical records.

It's been a quarter of a century since Alex Haley's book *Roots* and the *Roots* television miniseries galvanized Americans' interest in family history. In those 25 years, genealogy, once considered the precinct of blue-blooded ladies with pearls, has become one of the most popular hobbies in the nation. Sixty percent of Americans say they are interested in genealogy, a number that's increased by 33 percent in the five years since the last study was conducted.

In addition to *Roots*, experts cite a number of reasons for the increase, including a growing pride in ethnicity, a proliferation of Internet genealogy sites, and the realization by baby boomers that the World War II generation of their parents is fast disappearing.

And it's not just boomers who are looking beyond the family Bible. Seventy-two-year-old Barbara Walker and her husband, James, a founding member of the Afro-American Historical and Genealogical Society 25 years ago, used to have Alex Haley over for dinner. Now, she says, many of the people pursuing genealogy are in their 40s and 50s. "They have the time and the money and they want to prove their family history."

Of course people have been interested in family history for as long as there have been families. The Old Testament is thick with "begats," and in the Middle Ages

In the quarter century since *Roots* aired (right), Americans—including author Nancy Shute (opposite)—have embraced genealogy.

BY NANCY SHUTE ◆ PHOTOGRAPHS BY KAY CHERNUSH

Two days after the last episode of *Roots* aired on January 30, 1977, fans waited in a line a mile and a half long outside a Culver City, California, department store for author Alex Haley to sign copies of his best-selling book. Haley died in 1992 at age 70.

monks recorded royal pedigrees, bloodlines that were vital in defending claims to the throne. But in the West it was not until after 1500 or so, with the rise of a middle class, that the lives of ordinary people were recorded in baptismal records, deeds, wills and tax records. Today, people everywhere are researching family history and, in the process, rewriting history as a whole. The documents may be dry, but the secrets they hold are far from it.

Traditionally, genealogical research has been dusty, dreary and not for the lackadaisical. Alex Haley put in 12 years and half a million miles of travel in his search for his ancestors. His quest, sparked by family tales of a slave called Kin-tay who related stories of having been taken prisoner when he went to cut wood in his African homeland, drove Haley to spend months at the National Archives, the Library of Congress and dozens of other libraries. He met with African linguists to learn, finally, that one of Kin-tay's phrases, "Kamby Bolongo," probably meant Gambia River. He even flew to The Gambia in West Africa and traveled to a village where an oral history storyteller told him the long-ago story of Kunta Kinte, who went off to chop wood one day and was never seen again. Haley won a special Pulitzer Prize for his book, and the subsequent 12-hour-long television rendering of Kunta Kinte's saga transfixed 130 million viewers when it debuted in January 1977.

Although some faulted Haley's failure to distinguish fiction from fact, a *New York Times* book reviewer wrote that "no other novelist or historian has provided such a shattering, human view of slavery." Haley's blending of fact and fiction would later come back to haunt him. He was sued for plagiarism, and by the time he died in 1992, historians had challenged the accuracy of his research. Still unchallenged, however, is the impact of *Roots* on genealogy and popular understanding of African-American history.

Genealogy has shaken off its dust since Haley's day. Last spring, when I started searching for information about my grandparents, I didn't have to go overseas or even visit the National Archives. All I had to do was sit at a computer and type my grand-

BETTMANN/CORBIS; P. 76 PHOTOFEST

Alex Haley put in 12 years and half a million miles of travel in his search for his ancestors.

father's name into the on-line Ellis Island Archive (www.ellisisland.org), which offers a database of the 22 million people who passed through the island and the Port of New York between 1892 and 1924. I typed Ludwig Shute, but had no luck. Then I tapped in my grandmother's name. Moments later I had a listing for Emilia Detko, age 9, arriving on the SS *Finland* June 19, 1906, with her mother, Zuzanna, and her four siblings: Anna, Rudolf, Elzbieta, and Alojza. I called my dad and read off the names. "That's my mother," he said.

I was by no means the only one lured by the promise of instant gratification in the Ellis Island Archive. Forty percent of Americans have an ancestor who passed through the New York City harbor gateway, and when the Web site debuted it seemed like half of them had gone on-line at the same time. On its first day of operation the site drew so many hits—27,000 a second—that it all but froze. The Statue of Liberty–Ellis Island Foundation, which had taken on the project along with the National Park Service and the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—better known as the Mormon Church—scrambled to triple the number of servers in order to handle demand. Donna Belles, a Cleveland librarian, tried for ten days to log on. When she finally got through, she found Katarzyna Ruszaj, 16, arriving with another girl from a village in Galicia (a region of Poland and Ukraine) in 1912 and being met by her father from New Jersey. The New Jersey connection led her to believe that Katarzyna later became Catherine Smalley, her grandmother. Belles, 37, had never done genealogical research before, but the death of her mother in 1999 made her realize "I'd better find out what I want to find out now. I wanted a link to my past." On the Ellis Island site, she has traced relatives back to her great-great-grandmother. She marvels at her Internet adventure. "It sends you on this unreal odyssey."

Haley (in a photograph held by a Gambian woman) visited Juffure, The Gambia, to research the book that would make him famous.

JAMES DAVIS/EYE UBIQUITOUS/CORBIS

Unlike Donna Belles, Martin Napoli, Jr., a 56-year-old businessman in Naperville, Illinois, had already traced his family line back to 17th-century Sicily through the help of Mormon records. But he was unprepared for what he learned at the Ellis Island Web site. "I found the ship my dad's parents came on in October 1906," says Napoli. "There's Giacomo and Teresa, and Aunt Rosaria and Uncle Giorgio." Then he saw Maria, 8 years and 5 months. Scrolling to the right side of the manifest, he saw the word "died." "You want to talk about a shock," Napoli says. "We never knew that this poor young lady existed." He now lights candles in church for Aunt Maria.

Family history buffs say it's revelations like those that keep them going despite tedious records searches and blind alleys. I know I was certainly enchanted by my encounter with the past. After finding my grandmother on-line, I spent more hours than I'd care to admit wandering the Web seeking more. I found maps, mailing lists, newsgroups, chat rooms, family trees, country-specific sites, fake coats of arms, ethnic group sites, surname lists, professional researchers and pay-for-help services. But none of it got me closer to my grandfather. Shirley Wilcox, past president of the National Genealogical Society, sighed knowingly when she heard my tale. "The Internet has increased the number of people doing research," she says. "But you can't believe everything you find there. That's a huge problem right

Enthusiasm for genealogy brings researchers to wait before dawn for the Family History Library in Salt Lake City to open. Librarian Steven Blodgett travels the world finding records.

now. We need to educate people who are excited about doing research." Fortunately, there's help for neophytes like me. The national society offers on-line tutorials, as do other trustworthy sites, such as RootsWeb and Cyndi's List.

"People get on-line and say, 'I'm new to genealogy; where's the database?'" says Cyndi Howells, a 38-year-old genealogist and founder of what's considered one of the best genealogy sites on the Web (www.CyndisList.com). "I'm usually the first person to break it to them that there is no database, and they're going to have to do some work."

Howells hadn't set out to become an Internet expert when she showed up in 1995 at a meeting of her local genealogical society in Tacoma, Washington, with a list of links to genealogy pages she'd found on the then-embryonic Web. "Most people did more exciting things, like go to cemeteries," Howells says. "I had no idea that anyone would be interested, but they all jumped on me. I was the Internet person from that point on." The following spring, Howells posted Cyndi's List on-line, with 1,025 links. The site now has well over 100,000 links from around the world. "I read that the Internet was like a library with the books thrown on the floor," she says. "Cyndi's List is supposed to be a card catalog for the genealogy section of the library." Keeping it up, she adds, takes at least 12 hours a day. The Web may be the ideal place to learn how to unearth family history. But ultimately, she says, "you have to go to the records."

Indeed, it was records that drew me to that predawn line at the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. The library belongs to the Mormon Church, which has been collecting and recording genealogical material since 1894, because church members are encouraged to research their lineage and to baptize their ancestors retroactively, a key tenet of church doctrine. In 1938, the library decided to invest in a new technology, microfilm. By relieving researchers of the obligation to travel to far-flung courthouses and churches to see documents, that investment transformed both genealogical re-

search and the library itself. The church turned to its missionaries, arming them with cameras and dispatching them to some 110 countries. Today the collection extends to more than two million rolls of microfilm, and cameras are still clicking away in 40-plus countries. "We've been in Poland since 1967," says Stephen Barthel, public affairs staffer and international reference consultant. "We've filmed in Hungary. Slovakia is basically complete. We're filming in South Africa. We've been filming heavily in Russia for the last ten years. And we're filming in Chile, Peru, Uruguay."

Steven Blodgett is one of nine people who travel the world for the library, sniffing out documents to microfilm. "We're interested in any record that would have people's names, birth dates, relationships, family groups. Census records and things like that."

In 1999, the library took another technological leap, putting many of its databases on the Web. The site (www.familysearch.org) now draws eight million hits a day. And the church has started experimenting with digital photography, a technology that will make the Internet a far more powerful, and reliable, tool. Digital images can easily be sent via e-mail and posted on-line; many ship manifests are on the Ellis Island site, making it possible to see what the originals looked like. Soon the kinds of records that Haley spent years tracking down may be available on-line in a matter of minutes.

Barthel and fellow public affairs staffer, Tim Bingaman, had been giving me the standard visiting-journalist tour. But when I said I'd like to learn a few things about my grandfather, they reverted to their true natures. "What's his name? Give me his name," Barthel demanded, his scholarly demeanor replaced by the look of a bloodhound on a fresh scent. "Let's get his World War I draft record." After checking an index, he led me down a long aisle of beige metal cabinets, opened a drawer and selected a spool of microfilm from the hundreds there. No Ludwig Shutes were registered in Wisconsin, where my grandfather had lived before moving to the Pittsburgh area. "Pennsylvania draft records are by county," Barthel muttered, trotting down another aisle of cabinets. Within a few minutes he'd found the Washington County draft records, and found a Ludwig Shut, a miner at Pittsburgh Coal Company's Mine #9.

Soon the kinds of records that Haley spent years tracking down may be available in minutes.

"Let's go find him in 1920," said Bingaman, a former history teacher. The Washington County 1920 census records were a jumble of pages, a not uncommon result of microfilming. After much cranking back and forth on a microfilm reader, we found a handwritten census page that listed Ludwig Shut, his wife, Emmeline, four young children and a brother-in-law, Rudy Detko, living together at the mine's company town. But no birthplace, as we'd hoped. "We could go to the 1910 census," Barthel suggested, but Bingaman pointed out that immigrants' petitions to naturalize tended to have more information on them. We struck gold in the Pierce County, Wisconsin, petitions. "Right there!" Bingaman said, halting the whirring machine. "Oh, this might be a good one." It was. On April 4, 1908, Ludwig Szut swore that he

Nearly 200 volunteers (like Sister Beth Clawson, left, and Sister Shirley Carroll) assist the more than 600,000 annual visitors to the Family History Library.

Records of immigrants who passed through Ellis Island are now on-line.

GETTING STARTED

HOW TO FIND YOUR ELUSIVE ANCESTORS

IF YOU WANT TO START A FAMILY HISTORY, YOU should follow the advice inevitably given to aspiring short story writers and novelists: write what you know.

Genealogists say a good way to start researching your roots is to put down what you do know about your parents and other immediate relatives: when and where they were born, where they lived, who they married and, if dead, when and where they died. Talk with relatives, particularly older ones (but don't leave anyone else out), to record their stories and memories.

It's best to work backward, researching both ancestors and records from the known to the unknown, starting with deaths, then marriages and births.

Pick one ancestor to start with, and decide what you want to learn. Start looking for the answer to one question, like "When did he or she die?" Choose the records you want to use. Begin with original records, such as death certificates and census records. Then move on to "compiled" records, such as family histories written by someone else, always keeping in mind that these are less reliable than originals. Photocopy any original records you find and file them. Copies of the actual documents are most valuable to future generations.

Local and state genealogical societies can be a huge help in tracking down the records you need, as are Web sites such as the Family History Library (www.familysearch.org), the National Genealogical Society (ngsgenealogy.org), RootsWeb (www.-RootsWeb.com) and Cyndi's List (www.cyndislist.com). Most have lists you can check to see if others are already researching your family lines.

was neither an anarchist nor a polygamist and renounced his allegiance to Francis Joseph, emperor of Austria-Hungary. Szut had been born in Taschen, Austria, in 1884, and had arrived in New York on the *Blecker* June 8, 1905. On that one document was more than I'd ever known about my grandfather. Barthel smiled triumphantly. "It's addictive, isn't it?"

But we still wondered why Pap wasn't in the Ellis Island Archive. Bingaman loped off to another floor to look for the ship in microfilmed Ellis Island manifests. "I'll check the Hamburg passenger lists," said Barthel. "Maybe the arrival book is missing in Ellis Island." Evidently the Germans kept very good records, and the *Blücher* (not *Blecker*) had sailed from Hamburg. Barthel and I ran upstairs and down, collecting more microfilm. "That's the *Blücher* right here," he said. We read down the manifest line by line, hundreds of lines in spidery German script. And finally, there he was, Ludwig Sut, age 21, single, occupation "Bergmann." A miner. That would have been enough to make my day. But three lines above I saw a complete surprise: the name of Johann Detko, my great-grandfather. Unbeknownst to me, he and his future son-in-law had come over together. In less than three hours, we'd traced my grandfather, Ludwig Sut, from a young man, fleeing Europe in the disorder that presaged World War I, to a patriarch making his way in the New World. My family had regained a missing piece of our history.

Discoveries like mine change much more than the way we perceive family history, says John Humphrey, director of education for the National Genealogical Society. He remembers discovering that some of his ancestors arrived in Philadelphia in 1773 and promptly

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sold four of their eight children into indentured servitude. Genealogy, he says, becomes much more than an exercise in ego. "There's an incredible thing going on with African-Americans who are finding their roots," Humphrey says. "They're finding the contributions that their slave ancestors made to our history."

Despite the popularity of *Roots*, many African-Americans assumed there was little point trying to find their own ancestors because there would be no records. Slaves usually lacked surnames; African-Americans were listed on the census prior to 1870 but often generically as in "black female age 6." But, says Humphrey, though they usually belong to the descendants of slave owners, there are records—wills and tax rolls, for example—on which slaves are listed as possessions, not people. "You have to deal with ancestors who were labeled along with the furniture," says Maria Goodwin, historian of the U.S. Mint, who teaches African-American genealogy at the Smithsonian's Anacostia Museum. As a result, she says, many African-Americans are reluctant to probe too far into the past.

But the times are changing. Taking a page from Haley's book, more and more African-Americans are finding pride in the strength that allowed their ancestors to survive slavery and build a vibrant culture. And some whites are having to confront the less than savory aspects of their family's practices. In 1998, Edward Ball won a National Book Award for *Slaves in the Family*, his account of tracing the descendants of slaves once owned by his ancestors on rice plantations outside Charleston, South Carolina. Some of those descendants, he learned, are also his cousins, the progeny of forefathers who took slave mistresses. "The plantation heritage was not

And finally, there he was, Ludwig Sut, age 21, single, occupation "Bergmann." A miner.

'ours,' like a piece of family property," wrote Ball, "and not 'theirs,' . . . but a shared history."

Maria Goodwin has had similar experiences. Late one night she got a call from a stranger in Virginia who asked: "Are you only interested in black Cohrons?" Goodwin had an ancestor named Jenny who had been a slave on a Cohron plantation in Georgia in 1848. The Virginia stranger, who was white, had Cohron ancestors too, and after further networking, it became clear that the black and white Cohrons were intimately related. The caller "was trying to find the connection as well," says Goodwin, who says she long ago made peace with the awful parts of her family's past. "It's unfair to judge people by 2002 standards," she says. "You might not like what they did, but you've got to have an understanding of what rules they followed in that day."

That insight has led her to an even greater appreciation of the need to leave as much as possible for future genealogists. "Don't throw out those photographs because you're old and tired of tripping over them," Goodwin says. "Write down your memories. You think, 'I'm not anyone special,' but you're part of the total picture. We need everyone, not just the heads of corporations. We're all part of the story."

Writer Shute and photographer Chernush are frequent contributors to SMITHSONIAN.

Genealogy buff Donna Belles used the Ellis Island Web site to discover that her grandmother came to America from Eastern Europe in 1912. "It's such a path to the past," she says.

Still Delightful

A SUMPTUOUS SHOW DOCUMENTS HOW THE IMPRESSIONISTS BREATHED NEW LIFE INTO THE STAID TRADITION OF STILL LIFE PAINTING

IN 1880 THE RENOWNED FRENCH artist Edouard Manet was commissioned to paint a bunch of asparagus for financier Charles Ephrussi. A collector well known to the Impressionists, Ephrussi had agreed to pay 800 francs (roughly $1,700 today) for the work, but was so pleased with the painting that he gave the artist 1,000 francs instead. Delighted with the higher fee, Manet painted a small picture of a single stalk of asparagus and sent it to Ephrussi with a note that read, "Your bunch was one short."

Manet's luscious painting (p. 87) is just one of the many visual treats featured in a major exhibition on view through June 9 at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Organized by Washington, D.C.'s Phillips Collection, where it opened last September, and the Museum of Fine Arts, "Impressionist Still Life" focuses on the period from 1862 to 1904 and tracks the development of Impressionist still life from its beginnings in the realism of Gustave Courbet, Henri Fantin-Latour and Manet through its transformation in the innovative late canvases of Paul Cézanne.

"The Impressionists found in still life a rich opportunity for individual expression," says the Phillips' Eliza Rathbone, the show's curator. "They embraced a wider range of subject matter, explored unconventional compositions and points of view, introduced a deliberate informality and reinvigorated still life through their inventive use of light and color."

Whether depicting a simple cup and saucer or a carefully crafted arrangement of household items, the 16 artists in the show infused their paintings with an extraordinary vitality and freshness. They liberated still life from the conventions of the past and brought nuances of personal meaning to such everyday objects as books, shoes, hats, fans, fruit and crockery. "A painter," Manet once said, "can express all that he wants with fruit or flowers." —*Diane M. Bolz*

"People think a sugar bowl doesn't have a physiognomy, a soul," declared French artist Paul Cézanne. "But that changes every day. . . . Objects never stop living." For his 1888-90 *Kitchen Table* (above), Cézanne purposefully arranged the items to create a uniquely rhythmic composition. The images in Renoir's 1871 *Still Life with Bouquet* (right) allude to the work of Manet and to Spanish and Japanese art.

MUSÉE D'ORSAY, PARIS; P. 85 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, HOUSTON; P. 86 MUSEUM OF FINE ARTS, BOSTON; P. 87 WALLRAFF-RICHARTZ MUSEUM, COLOGNE; DENVER ART MUSEUM

In his boldly original *Fruit Displayed on a Stand* (c. 1881-82), Gustave Caillebotte creates the effect of an accidental experience. The unusual point of view and the slight asymmetry of the picture's axis give the impression that the scene is being viewed by a passerby. "His fruits stand out from their paper bedding with extraordinary clarity," wrote contemporary critic Joris-Karl Huysmans. "Juice wells up beneath his pears' skin . . . a dewy haze of moisture clings to the surface of the grapes . . . . it is still life freed of duty and routine."

Manet's loose, expressive brushwork and handling of color enliven his *Bunch of Asparagus*.

Berthe Morisot, who was married to Manet's brother, was a masterful colorist noted for her subtle tonal harmonies, as evidenced by *Tureen and Apple* (1877).

Edgar Degas rarely painted a pure still life, but he often included still lifes in the backgrounds or corners of his compositions. In *The Millinery Shop* (1882-86), the hats—their shapes, textures and colors—take center stage; the figure is merely an accessory.

"A PAINTER CAN EXPRESS ALL THAT HE WANTS WITH FRUIT OR FLOWERS."

— *Edouard Manet*

ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO, P.89 PRIVATE COLLECTION, FITZWILLIAM MUSEUM, CAMBRIDGE; METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NY

Eva Gonzalès' evocative *White Shoes* (c. 1879-80) reflects the influence of her mentor Manet.

By isolating ordinary objects in *White Cup and Saucer* (1864), Fantin-Latour gives them special import.

In *Still Life with Apples and Pitcher* (c. 1872), Camille Pissarro offsets the vertical emphasis of the wallpaper and the pyramid formed by the pitcher, glass and fruits with the diagonal of the knife. Pissarro's compositional methods greatly influenced his pupil Cézanne.

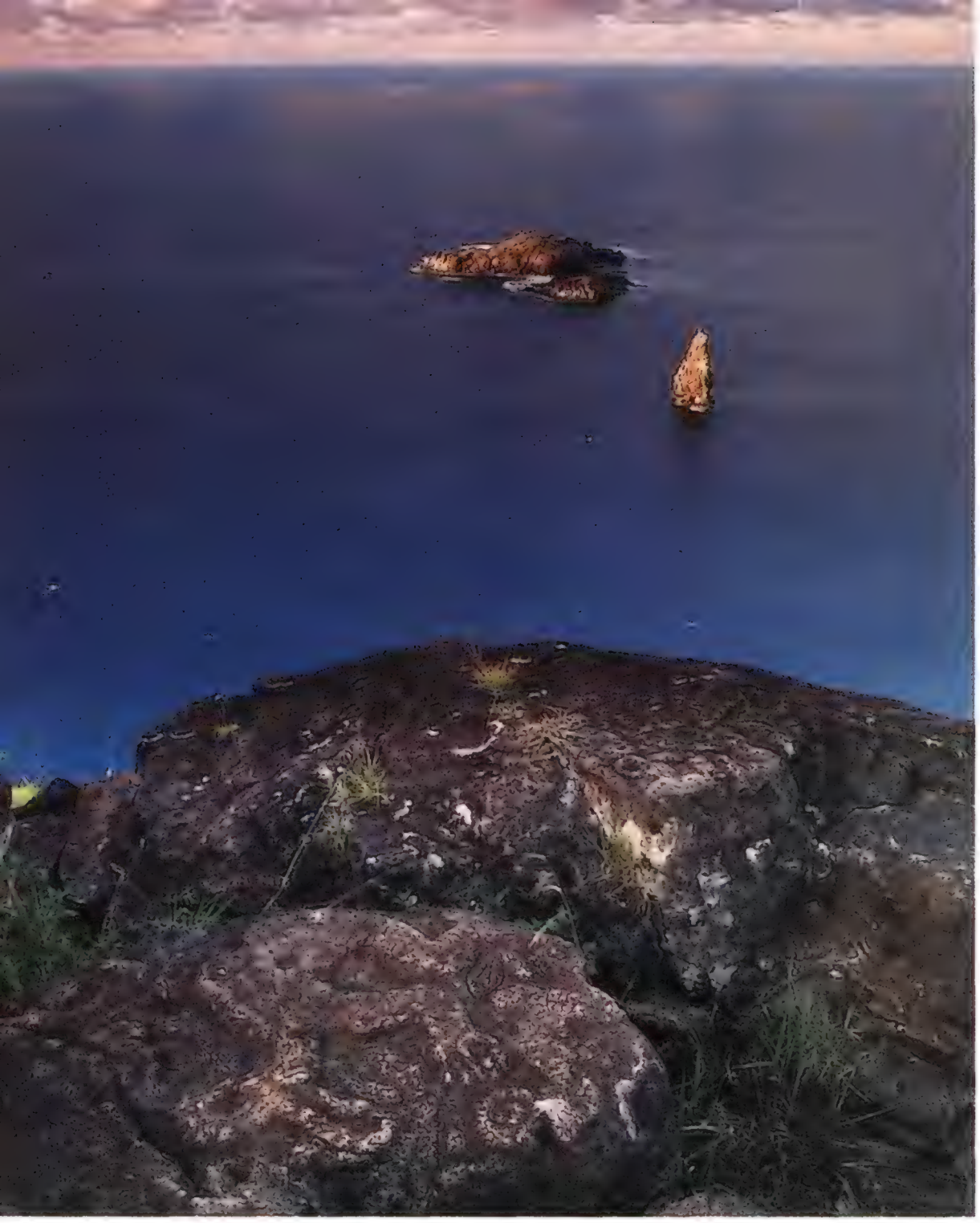
Mysterious Island

BY PAUL TRACHTMAN

THE MORE WE LEARN ABOUT EASTER ISLAND, THE MORE IT INTRIGUES, AS A NEW EXHIBITION OF ITS ART REMINDS US

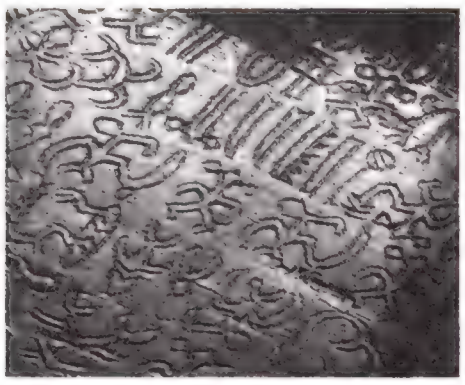
"There exists in the midst of the great ocean, in a region where nobody goes, a mysterious and isolated island," wrote the 19th-century French seafarer and artist Pierre Loti. "The island is planted with monstrous great statues, the work of I don't know what race, today degenerate or vanished; its great remains an enigma." Named

The seven statues of Ahu Akivi, the inland site restored in 1960 by archaeologist William Mulloy, stand sentinel, facing west toward the sea. According to local legend, they represent the island's original seven tribes. From about A.D. 700 to 1600, island sculptors created nearly 1,000 of these colossal figures, or *moai*.



Easter Island by the Dutch explorer Jacob Roggeveen, who first spied it on Easter Day 1722, this tiny spit of volcanic rock in the vast South Seas is, even today, the most remote inhabited place on earth. Its nearly 1,000 statues, some almost 30 feet tall and weighing as much as 80 tons, are still an enigma, but the statue builders are far from vanished. In fact, their descendants are making art and renewing their cultural traditions in an island renaissance.

To early travelers, the spectacle of immense stone figures, at once serenely godlike and savagely human, was almost beyond imagining. The island's population was too small, too primitive and too isolated to be credited with such feats of artistry, engineering and labor. "We could hardly conceive how these islanders, wholly unacquainted with any mechanical power, could raise such stupendous figures," the legendary British mariner Captain Cook wrote in 1774. He freely speculated on how the statues might have been raised, a little at a time, using piles of stones and scaffolding; and there has been no end of speculation, and no lack of scientific investigation, in the centuries that followed. By Cook's time, the islanders had toppled many of their statues and were neglecting those left standing. But the art of Easter Island still looms on the horizon of the human imagination.



The basalt rocks at Orango (top), on the island's southern tip, are carved with petroglyphs associated with the "birdman" cult that replaced worship of the giant ancestor statues. The offshore islets were nesting grounds for migrating sooty terns and frigate birds. A rare wooden tablet (above) is inscribed with the island's unique hieroglyph-like script. Most of these as-yet-undeciphered tablets were destroyed after the islanders converted to Christianity in the 1860s.

Just 14 miles long and 7 miles wide, the island is more than 2,000 miles off the coast of South America and 1,100 miles from its nearest Polynesian neighbor, Pitcairn Island, where mutineers from the HMS *Bounty* hid in the 19th century. Too far south for a tropical climate, lacking coral reefs and perfect beaches, and whipped by perennial winds and seasonal downpours, Easter Island nonetheless possesses a rugged beauty—a mixture of geology and art, of volcanic cones and lava flows, steep cliffs and rocky coves. Its megalithic statues are even more imposing than the landscape, but there is a rich tradition of island arts in forms less solid than stone—in wood and bark cloth, strings and feathers, songs and dances, and in a lost form of pictorial writing called *rongorongo*, which has eluded every attempt to decipher it.

This remarkable diversity is now on display in an exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City. "Splendid Isolation: Art of Easter Island," which opened in December and runs through August 4, 2002, is the first showing of Easter Island art ever held in North America. More than a third of the 50 or so objects on display have never been exhibited before. Among the treasures are three spectacular feather headdresses that have been kept in storage at the Smithsonian Institution ever since the USS *Mohican* brought them back from the island around 1887, along with the huge stone head of a statue, also in the show, that hasn't been exhibited in 50 years. Two slabs of stone incised with "birdman" petroglyphs—human figures with bird heads, icons of a religious cult that replaced veneration of the stone giants—are also in the exhibition.

In a society of hereditary chiefs, priests, clans, and guilds of specialized craftsmen,

TOM TILL; DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION; P. 90, 91 RICHARD T. NOWITZ

"We could hardly conceive how these islanders could raise such stupendous figures," wrote Captain Cook in 1774.

many objects served as tokens of status and power. Wooden clubs, for example, could be ornately carved as ceremonial symbols of authority, or wielded in battle. Also on view are wood carvings of ancient spirits, or *akuaku*, in the form of lizard men, and fragile human images, made of a paperlike bark cloth, which may have been ancestor effigies. In his introduction to the show's catalog, exhibition curator Eric Kjellgren notes that the Polynesians who first landed on Easter Island early in the first millennium "lived in virtual isolation for the next thousand years." Their art, though distinctly Polynesian, he says, reflects their "splendid isolation."

History, as much as art, made this island unique. But attempts to unravel that history have produced many interpretations and arguments. The missionary's anecdotes, the archaeologist's shovel, the anthropologist's oral histories and boxes of bones, have all revealed something of the island's story. But by no means all. When did the first people arrive? Where did they come from? Why did they carve such enormous statues? How did they move them and raise them up onto platforms? Why, after centuries, did they topple these idols? Such questions have been answered again and again, but the answers keep changing.

The islanders' origins were the subject of decades of debate after the great Norwegian adventurer Thor Heyerdahl and five companions made a daring voyage from Peru to Polynesia in 1947, drifting with wind and ocean currents aboard the wooden raft *Kon-Tiki* and finally crashing on a reef east of Tahiti. Seeing similarities between the stone art and architecture of Easter Island and that of the ancient Indian ruins in Bolivia and Peru, Heyerdahl was trying to prove that the original Easter Islanders could have sailed from South America. But there were so many holes in Heyerdahl's theory that it would have sunk quickly but for his own charisma and ability to patch leaky arguments with new speculations. Yet, to his great credit, Heyerdahl brought to the island a group of archaeologists and other researchers who, in turn, launched the modern era of scientific investigation.

Over the past few decades, archaeologists have assembled evidence that the first settlers came from another Polynesian island, but they can't agree on which one. Estimates of when people first reached the island are as varied, ranging from the first to the sixth century A.D. And how they ever found the place, whether by design or accident, is yet another bone of contention.

Some argue that the navigators of the first millennium could never have plotted a course over such immense distances without modern precision instruments. Others contend that the early Polynesians were among the world's most skilled seafarers—masters of the night sky and the ocean's currents. One archaeoastronomer suggests that a new supernova in the ancient skies may

According to Dutch accounts, the islanders of 1722 were generally large in stature, sturdy and strong. Their earlobes were often stretched or perforated, and the bodies of both the men and women were embellished with tattoos, as evident in the c. 1883 rendering (below) of the Rapa Nui man known as Juan Tepano. A massive head (bottom) from one of the ancient statues rests near the wharf in the island's only town, Hanga Roa.

BISHOP MUSEUM, HAWAII; RICHARD T. NOWITZ

From top: A drawing made on Captain Cook's 1774 voyage shows a Rapa Nui man with elongated earlobes and a feather headdress. A warrior's headdress of prized red-orange rooster feathers is thought to have been worn either in combat or for ritual dances; it was collected in 1886 by the USS *Mohican* expedition. A wooden pendant representing the head of a tuna, a rare and esteemed delicacy associated with high status, was likely worn by a chief. Members of the USS *Mohican* crew (above, right) excavate painted slabs bearing birdman petroglyphs from the interior of an Orongo house.

have pointed the way. But did the voyagers know the island was even there? For that, science has no answer. The islanders, however, do.

Benedicto Tuki is a tall 65-year-old master wood-carver and keeper of ancient knowledge. His piercing eyes are set in a deeply creased, mahogany face. He introduces himself as a descendant of the island's first king, Hotu Matu'a, who, he says, brought the original settlers from an island named Hiva in the Marquesas. He claims his grandmother was the island's last queen. He'll tell me about Hotu Matu'a, he says, but only from the center of the island, at a platform called Ahu Akivi with its seven giant statues. There he can tell the story in the right way.

In Tuki's native tongue, the island—like the people and the language—is called Rapa Nui. Platforms are called *ahu*, and the statues that sit on them, *moai* (mo-eye). As our jeep negotiates a rutted dirt road, the seven moai loom into view. Their faces are paternal, all knowing and human—forbiddingly human. These seven, Tuki says, are not watching over the land like those with their backs to the sea. These stare out beyond the island, across the ocean to the west, remembering where they came from. When Hotu Matu'a came to the island, he brought seven different races with him, which became the seven tribes of Rapa Nui. These moai represent the original ancestor from the Marquesas, and the kings of other Polynesian islands. Tuki himself stares into the distance as he chants their names. "This is not written down," he says. "My grandmother told me before she died." His is the 68th generation, he adds, since Hotu Matu'a.

Anthropologists have collected many variations of this legend. As Tuki tells it,

BRITISH MUSEUM, DEPARTMENT OF PRINTS AND PHOTOGRAPHS; JAMES D. DILORETO/SI; KARIN L. WILLIS/METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART, NEW YORK; NAA/SI

Sometimes, says island artist Cristián Arévalo Pakarati, the old stories hold as much truth as anything the scientists unearth.

because of fighting at home, the young chief Hotu Matu'a gathered his followers for a voyage to a new land. His tattooist and priest, Hau Maka, had flown across the ocean in a dream and saw Rapa Nui and its location, which he described in detail. Hotu Matu'a and his brother-in-law set sail in long double canoes, loaded with people, food, water, plant cuttings and animals. After a voyage of two months, they sailed into Anakena Bay, which was just as the tattooist had described it.

In the minds of the native people, science and legend seem to weave themselves together. The names of early anthropologists and archaeologists—among them England's Katherine Routledge (1914-15) and Switzerland's Alfred Métraux (1934-35)—who collected legends, recorded customs and restored some of the ahu by raising the fallen statues, are as familiar as the names of ancient kings. Instrumental in the rebirth of the island, they have become cultural heroes. One of the archaeologists Thor Heyerdahl brought to the island in the 1950s, William Mulloy, became a kind of father figure to a small band of students who continued his work.

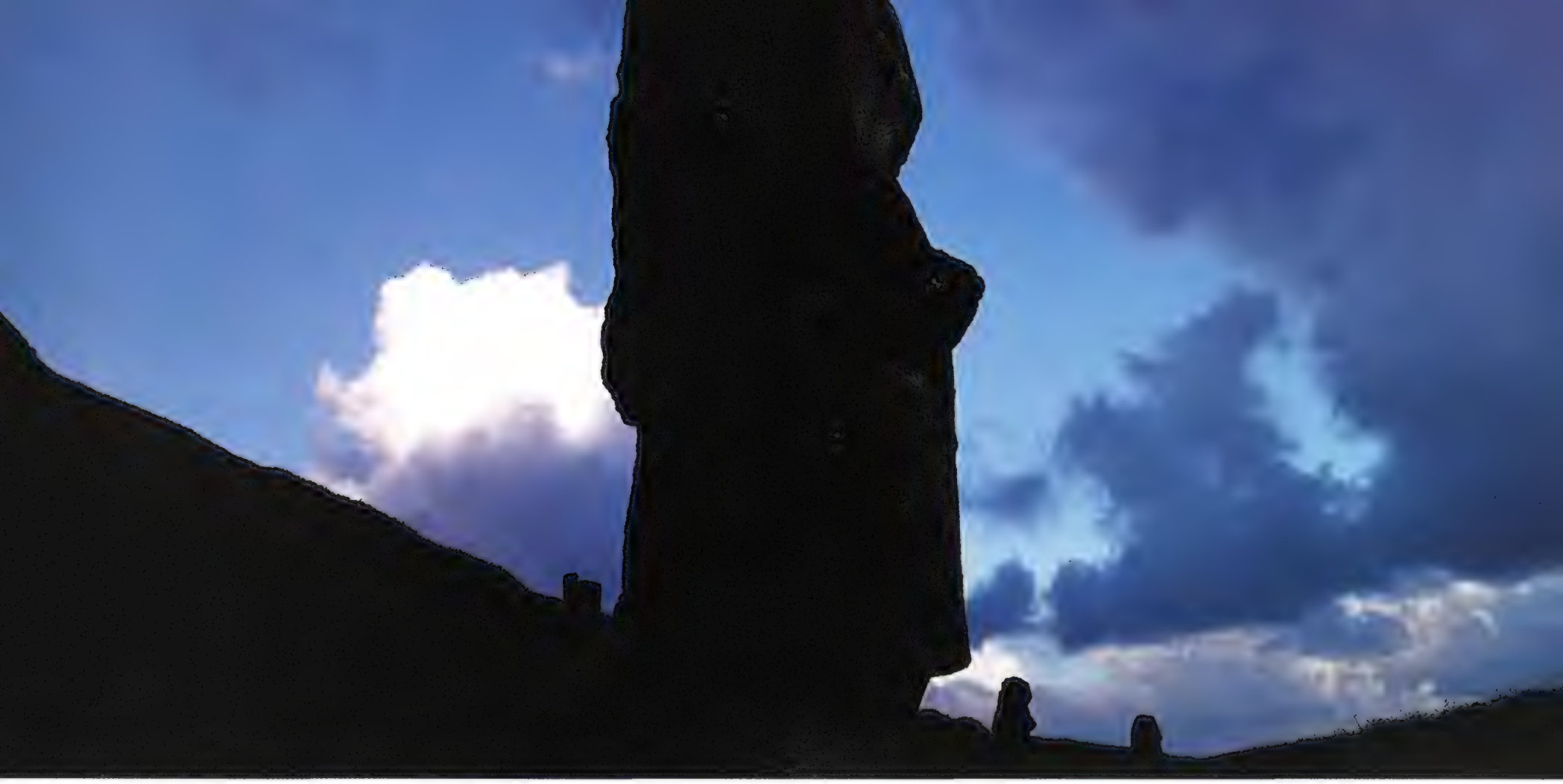
Sometimes, says Cristián Arévalo Pakarati, an island artist in a New York Yankees cap who has worked with several archaeologists, the old stories hold as much truth as anything the scientists unearth. He tells me this as we climb up the cone of the volcano called Rano Raraku to the quarry where the great moai were once carved. The steep path winds through an astonishing landscape of moai, standing tilted and without order, many buried up to their necks, some fallen facedown on the slope, about 70 in all, apparently abandoned here before they could be moved across the island to the ahu for which they were carved. Pakarati is dwarfed by a stone head as he stops to lean against it. "It's hard to imagine," he says, "how the carvers must have felt when they were told to stop working. They'd been carving these statues here for centuries, until one day the boss shows up and tells them to quit, to go home, because there's no more food, there's a war, and nobody believes in the statue system anymore!" Pakarati identifies so strongly with his forebears because, working with UCLA archaeologist Jo Anne Van Tilburg, he's spent many years making detailed drawings and measurements of all the island's moai. Now, as we climb into the quarry itself, he shows me where the carving was done.

The colossal figures are everywhere, in every stage of completion, laid out on their backs with a sort of stone keel attaching them to the bedrock. Carved from a soft stone called lapilli tuff, a compressed volcanic ash, several figures lie side by side in a niche. "These people had absolute control over the stone," Pakarati says. "They could move statues from here to Tahai, which is 15 kilometers away, without breaking the nose, the lips, the fingers or anything." Then he points to a few broken heads and bodies on the slope below and laughs. "Obviously, accidents were allowed."

When a statue was almost complete, the carvers drilled holes through the keel to break it off from the bedrock, then slid it down the slope into a big hole, where they could stand it up to finish the back. Eye sockets were carved

A variant of the classic birdman image, the unusual wooden figure (below) was acquired by Pierre Loti on his 1872 visit to the island. It may be a representation of the island's most powerful god, Make-make. Such sculptures were popular in Europe in the late 19th and early 20th centuries and greatly influenced the surrealists. The leader of the 1786 French expedition, Comte de La Pérouse (bottom), measures an island statue.

KARIN L. WILLIS/METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART; STAPLETON COLLECTION/CORBIS



A lone hiker (top) explores the ridge of Rano Raraku, the volcanic cone where the massive moai were carved. When Pierre Loti first saw these statues in 1872, "with their pointed noses and their thin lips," he found them frightening. One of the few fragile bark cloth images to survive, the 19th-century seated male figure (above) displays the ornate tattoos and body painting once popular among the Rapa Nui.

once a statue was on its ahu, and white coral and obsidian eyes were inserted during ceremonies, to awaken the moai's power. In some cases, the statues were adorned with huge cylindrical hats or topknots of red scoria, another volcanic stone. But first a statue had to be moved over one of the roads that led to the island's nearly 300 ahu. How that was done is still a matter of debate. Rapa Nui legends say the moai "walked" with the help of a chief or priest who had mana, or supernatural power. On the island in 1986, a crew put together by Thor Heyerdahl and Czech engineer Pavel Pavel walked an upright moai by rocking it from side to side, like a refrigerator. Archaeologists have proposed other methods for moving the statues, using various combinations of log rollers, sledges and ropes. Cristián Pakarati points out that the word "mana" can also mean technology or intelligence, so the old legends and modern science may not be so far apart. "Maybe those old people are right to say the statues were moved with mana," he muses.

Trying to sort out the facts of the island's past has led researchers into one riddle after another—from the meaning of the monuments to the reasons for the outbreak of warfare and the cultural collapse after a thousand years of peace. Apart from oral tradition, there is no historical record before the first European ships arrived. But evidence from many disciplines, such as the excavation of bones and weapons, the study of fossilized vegetation, and the analysis of stylistic changes in the statues and petroglyphs allows a rough historical sketch to emerge: The people who settled on the island found it covered with trees, a valuable resource for making canoes and eventually useful in transporting the moai. They brought with them plants and animals to provide food, although the only animals that survived were chickens and tiny Polynesian rats. Artistic traditions, evolving in isolation, produced a rich imagery of ornaments for the chiefs, priests and their aristocratic lineages. And many islanders from the lower-caste tribes achieved status as master carvers, divers, canoe builders or members of other artisan's guilds. Georgia Lee, an archaeologist who spent six years documenting the island's petroglyphs, finds them as remarkable as the moai. "There's nothing like it in Polynesia," she says of this rock art. "The size, scope, beauty of designs, and workmanship, is extraordinary."

At some point in the island's history, when both the art and the population were increasing, the island's resources were overtaxed. Too many trees had been cut down. "Without trees you've got no canoes," says Pakarati. "Without canoes you've got no fish, so I think people were already starving when they were carv-

KEVIN SCHAFER, HILLEL BURGER/PEABODY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY, MASSACHUSETTS

ing these statues. The early moai were thinner, but these last statues have great curved bellies. What you reflect in your idols is an ideal, so when everybody's hungry, you make them fat, and big." When the islanders ran out of resources, they threw their idols down and started killing each other over what was left.

Some archaeologists point to a layer of subsoil with many obsidian spear points as a sign of sudden warfare. Islanders say there was probably cannibalism, as well as carnage, and seem to think no less of their ancestors because of it. Smithsonian forensic anthropologist Douglas Owsley, who has studied the bones of some 600 individuals from the island, has found numerous signs of trauma, such as blows to the face and head. But only occasionally, he says, did these injuries result in death. In any case, a population that grew to as many as 20,000 was reduced to only a few thousand at most when the captains of the first European ships counted them in the early 18th century. Over the next 150 years, with visits by European and American sailors, French traders and missionaries, Peruvian slave raiders, Chilean imperialists and Scottish ranchers (who introduced sheep and herded the natives off the land, fencing them into one small village), the Rapa Nui people were all but destroyed. By 1877 there were only 110 natives left on the island.

When Katherine Routledge arrived in 1914, she found that "the inhabitants of today are less real than the men who have gone; the shadows of the departed builders still possess the land." Such poetry popularized the mystery of the island, while the Rapa Nui remained confined to a single area, according to Routledge, "to secure the safety of the livestock." Although the population rebounded steadily through the 20th century, native islanders still don't own their land. The Chilean government claimed possession of Easter Island in 1888 and, in 1935, designated it as a national park, to preserve some 6,000 archaeological sites. Today, there are about 2,000 native people, and about as many Chileans, crowded into the island's only village, Hanga Roa, and its outskirts. Under growing pressure, the Chilean government is giving back a small number of homesteads to native families, alarming some archaeologists and stirring intense debate. But though they remain largely dispossessed, the Rapa Nui people have reemerged from the shadows of the past, recovering and reinventing their ancient art and culture.

Carving a small wooden moai in his yard, Andreas "Panda" Pakarati is part of that cultural renewal. "I'm the first professional tattooist on the island in 100 years," he says, soft eyes flashing under a rakish black beret. Panda's interest was stirred

The only surviving example of its kind, this 19th-century bark cloth headdress (top) was worn like a visor. The image is reminiscent of representations of the god Make-make, and its intricately painted surface and careful modeling indicate that it was a highly valued object meant for important occasions. It was most likely worn as a part of the ritual regalia of a chief or priest. The seven-foot-long carved and painted wooden dance paddle (above) is from the 1880s and was used primarily in ceremonies related to the birdman cult.

HILLEL BURGER/PEABODY MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY AND ETHNOLOGY, HARVARD UNIVERSITY; DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY, SI

Local artists are reviving the island's traditions. Above, from top: Cristián Arévalo Pakarati peruses his archaeological sketchbook. Tattooist Andreas "Panda" Pakarati displays a wooden moai he's just carved. Master wood-carver and island elder Benedicto Tuki works on a moai kavakava figure. Cristián Silva shows off his latest paintings. Carolina Edwards (above right) prepares to dance. Archaeologist Jo Anne Van Tilburg (far right) uses a grid to measure a moai.

by pictures he saw in a book as a teenager, and tattoo artists from Hawaii and other Polynesian islands taught him their techniques. He has taken most of his designs from Rapa Nui rock art and from Georgia Lee's 1992 book on the petroglyphs. "Now," says Panda, "the tattoo is reborn."

Other artists of Panda's generation are also breathing new life into old art. In his small studio that doubles as living space, the walls lined with large canvases of Polynesian warriors and tattooed faces, Cristián Silva paints Rapa Nui themes with his own touch of swirling surrealism. "I paint because I appreciate my culture," he says. "The moai are cool, and I feel connected to ancestral things. On this island you can't escape that! But I don't copy them. I try to find a different point of view."

The dancers and musicians of the Kari Kari company, shouting native chants and swaying like palms in the wind, are among the most striking symbols of a cultural renewal. "We're trying to keep the culture alive," says Jimmy Araki, one of the musicians. "We're trying to recuperate all our ancient stuff and put it back together, and give it a new uprising." Dancer Carolina Edwards, 22, arrives for a rehearsal astride a bright red all-terrain vehicle, ducks behind some pickup trucks on a hill overlooking one of the giant statues, and emerges moments later in the ancient dress of Rapa Nui women, a bikini made of tapa, or bark cloth. "When I was little they used to call me *tokerau*, which means wind, because I used to run a lot, and jump out of trees," she says, laughing. "Most of the islanders play guitar and know how to dance. We're born with the music." The dancers rehearse or perform four nights a week, and most have other jobs as well. Edwards teaches dance and works in her father's tourism business. "Everybody creates the dances," she says. "We all talk about the story, the song, the meaning, what kind of movement to use. People are very happy with what they have here. That's why, when tourists come from different countries, we're saying, like, 'Ha! See my island. This is *my* island!'"

Smithsonian anthropologist Adrienne Kaeppler suggests in an essay for the Metropolitan Museum exhibition catalog that the performing arts will become Easter Island's featured form of cultural expression in the 21st century. But some scholars, and some islanders, say the new forms have less to do with ancient culture than with today's tourist dollars. "What you have now is reinventing," says Rapa Nui archaeologist Sergio Rapu, a former governor of the island. "But the people in the culture don't like to say we're reinventing. So you have to say, 'OK, that's Rapa Nui culture.' It's a necessity. The people are feeling a lack of what they lost."

Even the oldest and most traditional of artisans, like Benedicto Tuki, agree that tourists provide the essential support for their culture. But he insists that the culture is intact—that its songs and skills carry the ancient knowledge into the pres-

PAUL TRACHTMAN (5); JAMES L. AMOS/CORBIS

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"Behind the statues you have the people with their dreams, their needs to develop the island. The question is, who owns the past?"

ent. Grant McCall, an anthropologist from the University of New South Wales in Australia, concurs. When I ask McCall, who has recorded the genealogies of island families on visits since 1968, how a culture could be transmitted through only 110 people, he tugs at his scruffy blond mustache. "Well, it only takes two people," he says, "somebody who is speaking and somebody who is listening."

Since many families' claims to land are based on their claim to knowledge of ancestral boundaries, the argument is hardly academic. Chilean archaeologist Claudio Cristino, who spent 25 years documenting and restoring the island's treasures, frames the debate dramatically. "There are native people on the island, and all over the world, who are using the past to recover their identities, land and power," he says. Contemplating the present from his office at the University of Chile in Santiago, he is not sanguine. "As a scientist, with all my deficiencies, I've spent half my life there. It's my island! And now people are already clearing land and plowing it for agriculture, destroying archaeological sites. Behind the statues you have people with their dreams, their needs to develop the island. Are we as scientists responsible for that? The question is, who owns the past?"

Who, indeed? The Rapa Nui mayor of Hanga Roa, Petero Edmunds, opposes the Chilean government's plans for giving away land. He wants the entire park returned to Rapa Nui control, to be kept intact. "But they won't listen," he says. "They've got their fingers in their ears." And who should look after it? "The people of Rapa Nui who have looked after it for a thousand years," he answers. He becomes pensive. "The moai are not silent," he says. "They speak. They're an example our ancestors created in stone, of something that is within us, which we call spirit. The world must know this spirit is alive."

Frequent contributor Paul Trachtman is profiled in "Behind the Lines" (page 11).

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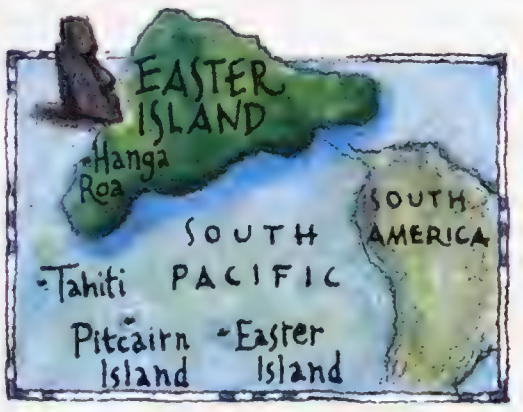
Care to journey to this tiny mote of land in the South Pacific and explore its ancient heritage?

"CULTURE," WRITES anthropologist Grant McCall, is "bursting out all over on Rapa Nui." The island is far, far away from most places, but by LanChile airline it's easy enough to get to (round-trip fares from Miami range from $1,300 to $2,000). For the day-and-a-half journey, keep your mind occupied with Paul Bahn and John Flenley's *Easter Island, Earth Island*. And check out the Easter Island Foundation's info-laden Web site, islandheritage.org.



ONCE ON THE ISLAND you'll find the Rapa Nui people to be welcoming hosts—most speak Spanish, and many gather at the airport to offer places to stay and cars for hire. Tours of the island are varied and generally quite informative. But consider hiring a private guide with a car to explore the scores of impressive archaeological sites at your own pace. Be forewarned: no matter how tempting the photographic possibilities, climbing on a statue or its platform is prohibited.

THE SUMMER FESTIVAL known as Tapati Rapa Nui is a ten-day whirlwind of song and dance, usually held in January and February. The island swarms with visitors then, but this extravaganza should not be missed.

◆ **INSIDE TIP:** Hang out with visiting archaeologists at their preferred lodging, the Hotel O'tai (otaira-panui@entelchile.net). In addition to meeting these experts, you'll find the grounds abloom in tropical island flowers.

◆ **CHOICE COLLECTIBLE:** Island wood-carvers are creating some exciting new forms. For the widest variety of their handicrafts, visit the artisan market near the church on Tu'u Koihu Street.

◆ **YOU SHOULD KNOW:** Safe drinking water is at a premium on the island, so be sure to stock up in the village before venturing out.

◆ **FOR THE GOURMAND:** At the dock, where fishermen tie up their boats, expatriate French chef Pesquet Gilles and his Rapa Nui wife, Rapu Lisa, run a little bistro, La Taverne Du Pecheur. You must try the local fish, *nanue*. It's a delicacy the people of Rapa Nui dream about when they leave the island.

ELIZABETH WOLF

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PRESENCE OF MIND

Other People's Words

THOUGH SOME WRITERS MAY SHRUG IT OFF AS THE SINCEREST FORM OF FLATTERY, PLAGIARISM IS HARDLY A MINOR MENACE

BY PAUL GRAY

IMAGINE YOURSELF A HIGH school history teacher who has been handed a research paper on air combat during World War II by one of your better students. In it, you come upon the following sentence, without quotation marks: "No amount of practice could have prepared the pilot and crew for what they encountered—B-24s, glittering like mica, were popping up out of the clouds over here, over there, everywhere." A footnote identifies your student's source: *Wings of Morning* (1995), by Thomas Childers, page 83. You're conscientious about your work, so you check the reference against the Childers book, where you read: "No amount of practice could have prepared them for what they encountered. B-24s, glittering like mica, were popping up out of the clouds all over the sky."

Since it boggles the notion of probability to believe that these nearly identical sentences could have been written independently, you, dear teacher, are stuck with two possible explanations: either your student forgot the rule that the use of someone else's language must be identified as such by quotation marks—that is, that a footnote alone is not enough to indicate a word-for-word appropriation of material—or the student assumed that you wouldn't bother to track down the original passage. If you decide that sloppiness is the cause, you flunk the paper and hope the lesson will stick, this time; if you have reasons to believe that deceit was the motive, you report your student to the responsible school authorities.

But what should be the response when the malefactor isn't a teenager but rather Stephen E. Ambrose, 66, who has become over the past eight years probably the most famous and widely read historian in the United States? For, as the *Weekly Standard* reported in early January, Ambrose's best-selling *The Wild Blue* (2001) reproduced, footnoted but without quotation marks, the "glittering like mica" passage cited above, and two others as well, from Thomas Childers' book. Given Ambrose's prominence—he's appeared in photographs flanked by Tom Hanks and Steven Spielberg—the hunt was immediately on for other examples of apparent plagiarism in his works. Sure enough, other examples turned up: passages in *The Wild Blue* that are suspiciously similar to two other sources in addition to Childers, plus unacknowledged quotations in at least three of Ambrose's earlier books dating back to *Crazy Horse and Custer* in 1975.

Stephen Ambrose's inadequate attributions have tarnished his reputation.

A front-page story in *The New York Times* reporting the growing furor over Ambrose's methods included a truculent mea culpa by the historian: "I wish I had put the quotation marks in, but I didn't. I am not out there stealing other people's writings. If I am writing up a passage and it is a story I want to tell and this story fits and a part of it is from other people's writing, I just type it up that way and put it in a footnote. I just want to know where the hell it came from." This explanation baffled most academic historians, not to mention most readers of it. Even those who had defended Ambrose on the grounds that the former professor—with the help of his five grown children—churns out best-selling books so rapidly that slipshod mistakes were inevitable had to reconsider. Ambrose hadn't said he'd been careless through haste, but that, by his lights, he hadn't been careless at all.

While the Ambrose story still percolated in late January, the *Weekly Standard* (yes, again) published some passages from Doris Kearns Goodwin's *The Fitzgeralds and the Kennedys* (1987) that, without quotation marks, almost exactly reproduce passages in three earlier books about the Kennedys. Asked to comment on these similarities, Goodwin, whose book on Franklin and Eleanor Roo-

STEFANCHIK JOE/DALLAS M./CORBIS SYGMA

sevelt won the 1995 Pulitzer Prize for history, told the *Weekly Standard*: "I wrote everything in longhand in those days, including the notes I took on secondary sources. . . . Drawing on my notes, I did not realize that in some cases they constituted a close paraphrase of the original work." Yep, that is certainly one way of committing what looks like plagiarism, and it's a way that beginning students are repeatedly reminded not to take.

What, if anything, should the reading public make of the Ambrose and Goodwin dustups or of the many similar cases of plagiarism-spotting, real or fanciful, that have cropped up so often over the past few decades? Some have had real consequences. Alex Haley paid author Harold Courlander some $600,000 to settle a plagiarism suit for material Haley appropriated for *Roots* (see p. 76); Senator Joseph Biden's bid for the Democratic Presidential nomination in 1988 hit a wall when it was demonstrated that he'd lifted a stump speech, virtually verbatim, from then British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock. Other accusations of plagiarism have dragged prominent names through headlines with inconclusive results: historian Stephen B. Oates, authors Susan Sontag and Jay McInerney. Is any of this of more than academic interest?

Certainly, if you believe that an author's words unencumbered by quotation marks have been conceived of and arranged solely by that author. This notion has been around long enough, one would think, for all concerned to have gotten the hang of it. "Original" used to mean what it still means in the term "original sin": it's not a brand-new way of being evil but a reference to the stain of mortality engendered by the illicit apple tasting in the Garden of Eden. In the preface to his *Fables, Ancient and Modern* (1700), poet John Dryden apparently struck the word's modern coinage: "I have added some original papers of my own."

That Ambrose and Goodwin have offered readers some ostensibly original sentences that are not of their own is assuredly a lapse rather than a crime. These talented, industrious historians did not plagiarize their way into eminence. But the lapses remain troubling, as do the rather blithe, dismissive self-defenses expressed by both authors. Unintentional theft remains theft, whether committed by those who know better or by those who are in the process of learning. ♜

Paul Gray has written about V.S. Naipaul and William Faulkner for these pages.

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TAKING

ISSUE

Curios?

UNTOUCHABLE PORCELAIN MEETS FLUTTERING PIGEONS

BY ANDREI CODRESCU

OUR NEXT-DOOR NEIGHBORS IN TRANSYLvania in the 1950s were a nice German couple who had two well-behaved and clean kids, my friend Peter and his sister, Greta, with whom I was in love. At their house you had to take off your shoes at the door, and, on Sundays, if you were wearing long pants, you could go into their *Kunstcamera*, a mysterious room steeped in eternal chiaroscuro, where they kept vitrines full of porcelain dolls, cuckoo clocks, and some mechanisms that ticked softly and were slightly erotic. We were allowed only a few minutes in there and couldn't touch anything, but then I wanted only to touch Greta. By contrast, you could enter our house in the silly short, leather pants that we wore and play with anything. My mother's halfhearted curio cabinet was the object of so many intrusions, our dirty little paws had marked everything. Peter and I used to have grave conversations about "important" things, but since we were both bright and afflicted with attention deficit disorder, we dwelled on them only for the briefest of times. Reading this issue of SMITHSONIAN was a bit like both houses, a feeling that the world is mildly mysterious but in the end all will be well

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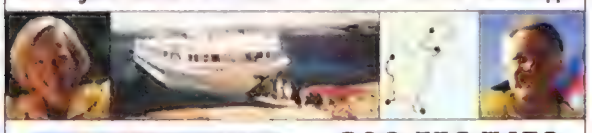

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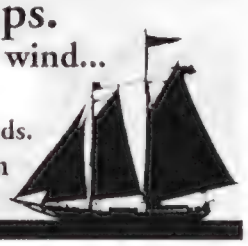

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This business about Pluto, the ice ball, would definitely have been one of the topics Peter and I would have discussed. Is it a planet? What's a planet? We would also have discussed the huge stone heads on Easter Island—in fact, I'm sure we did—but we would have been more awed by their mystery. In addition to being huge, those heads are hugely poetic, but the cosmic frisson is missing from the article. There is a fair account of the various theories of their origin and the history of their discovery, but there is little of that swift electrical charge that jumps from even the brief citations of Captain Cook and Pierre Loti who see the *moai*. The tragedy of the few remaining inhabitants who are making artifacts and hoping to connect to something much bigger than themselves receives a reassuring gloss. Perhaps it's all about tourism, perhaps it isn't, but this is one of those issues that receives scant attention.

In fact, I didn't find much critical writing in this issue. I know that the great institution whose image the magazine promotes is dedicated to the praise and preservation of our nation's culture, but isn't critical thinking one of America's best traditions? The article on genealogy is egregious in this regard, particularly since it assumes an interesting angle and is full of potentially extraordinary stories. The author traces the popularity of genealogy to the success of Alex Haley's *Roots*, and to the proliferation of Web sites maintained by the Mormon Church and amateurs. This unlikely coalition of revisionist fiction, religious interest and new baby boomer hobby could be the subject of interesting reflection. The author's search for her own roots is a

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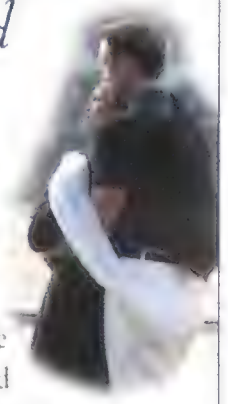

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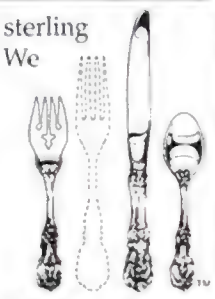

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nice piece of detective work, but it is a separate matter. Her enthusiasm for the democratization of what was once the exclusive hobby of "blue-blooded ladies with pearls" leads her to a nearly utopian vision of universal reconciliation between races. In a particularly saccharine anecdote, a descendant of slaves connects with a white descendant of slave-owners who could be her blood relative.

The author's cheeriness is undimmed by the knowledge that the Mormons often use genealogical records to retroactively baptize dead non-Mormons who may not appreciate it; or by the fact that genealogy may be used to justify wacko race theories; or that the act of discovering the lies and crimes of one's predecessors might lead to misery, not understanding. Or that, far from establishing historical serenity, the hobby leads to a huge market in fake family coats of arms and other kitsch, not to speak of patently false images of lost homelands that pass for recovered ethnicity. Baby boomer blitheness about "ethnicity" is particularly grating. I have met scores of third- or fourth-generation American Jews who have roamed the hinterlands of Eastern Europe looking for their "roots," barely mindful that the dust of the old shtetls is partly (and still) composed of their obliterated ancestors. (It's just an illusion that young Jews know much about Eastern Europe and their sad history there; they don't.) Their "roots" have been eradicated to a degree that the cleverest chamber of commerce could not deny; yet my friends' boundless enthusiasm can conjure them. In all fairness to the writer, she has a great deal of faith in the human race and she has, clearly, never read Mark Twain on Americans' enormous capacity for self-delusion when it comes to Old World pedigrees. (Recommended reading: *The American Claimant*.)

If this were the whole magazine, I would have been desolate indeed. Happily, there is a superb piece of re-

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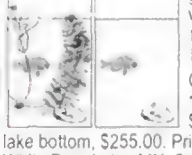

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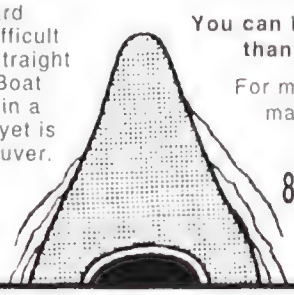

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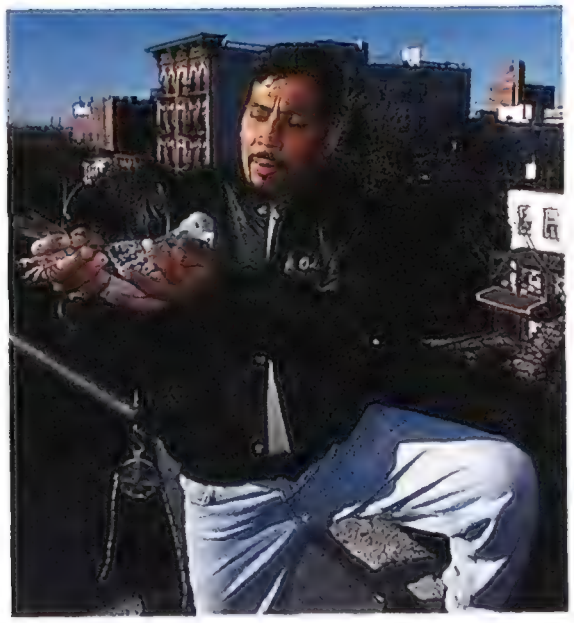

Martinez: "New Yorker and true original."

porting, a pièce de résistance that illuminates in surprising and delightful ways. "Flights of Fancy" is one of those stories for which magazines are read, not sniffed. I knew nothing about pigeon racing, but this would have been a subject that Peter and I would have worried over longer than Pluto. Reading "Flights," I fell in love with pigeon racer Orlando Martinez, a New Yorker, new American and true original. Andrew Blechman's vivid writing is in part responsible for my fascination.

The fortunate intersection of several subjects is what makes the article, and American life, interesting. From Martinez's home life with his girlfriend, Omayra, amid fluttering pigeons to the atmosphere of the multiethnic racers' club, I felt that I was in the presence of a live local culture that was, simultaneously, universal. This isn't culture under glass or on a Web site. If a museum preserves objects, writing ought to reveal the dynamic of what is worth preserving. These pigeons fly long distances, and their racers drive restlessly to train them, yet this agitated life is solidly rooted in neighborhood and lifestyle, and drenched besides in the eternal juices of unsteady human feelings of disappointment, greed, triumph and searching. No dust here, no need to remove your shoes.

Andrei Codrescu, an NPR commentator, has just published Casanova in Bohemia, a novel about the last years of Giacomo Casanova.

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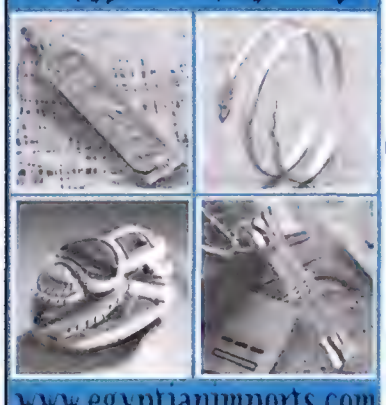

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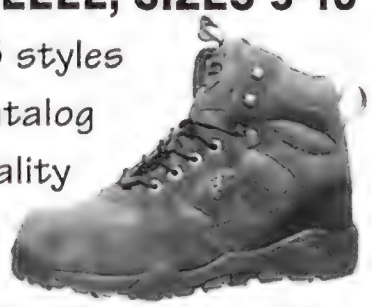

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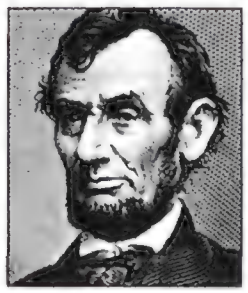

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Everywhere, he finds the crane besieged—by dams, deforestation, pesticides, power lines, dredging, hunting. "Too many people," he mutters in the middle of a Chinese marsh ringed by vegetable plots. In an eerie interlude in South Korea, all the cranes are squeezed into a narrow "accidental paradise," habitat created by the existence of the Demilitarized Zone, one place Homo sapiens can't overrun.

The real intrigue of this, Matthiessen's 28th book, is in his evocation of people and landscapes. In Mongolia, a deserted brick tower now serves as a refuge for a thriving population of swifts. There, too, on the steppe, a nomad flings down a freshly killed marmot for supper. In Bhutan, the tiny corpse of an old woman is soon to be chopped up and fed to fishes. The crane connection is not always obvious, but with Matthiessen questions of life and death are sources of eloquent meditations.

Kevin Krajick writes from New York City.

The Bone Museum
Wayne Grady
Four Walls Eight Windows, $24.95

THE MUSEUM OF the title is Earth, across which Canadian writer Wayne Grady roams in search of dinosaur fossils, contemplating the profound questions these discoveries raise. "In order to understand life," he asserts, "we need to understand extinction." That understanding was rocked with the 1996 fossil discovery of feathers on some flightless dinosaurs, which convinced paleontologist Phil Currie, and many others, that the lumbering giants of prehistory did not die out, but evolved into modern birds. In a previous book, Grady accompanied Cur-

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rie to a fossil dig in China. This time he treks with the scientist to Argentina and western Canada.

The journey is everything—and not just because Grady's aging VW van tends to conk out along the least hospitable back roads of Canada. (Wisely, they *flew* to South America.) Movies like *Jurassic Park* suggest that dino discovery is a high-tech enterprise, but the reality is rusty jeeps and decrepit wheelbarrows. At a remote site in Argentina, the crew spends weeks chipping rock away from fossils while living in tents and dining on powdered food that tastes like "wallpaper glue."

The rarest discovery comes in Canada: a sacrum (the five vertebrae lower-backbone assembly) of a duck-billed dino, *Hypacrosaurus*. Currie arranges for a helicopter to haul out the 600-pound fossil. But when the sacrum sways dangerously in midair, the pilot lets it go; the dino turns to dust. "It was a kind of sacrilege," writes Grady, "as though a pallbearer had slipped on the wet church steps in the rain and dropped the coffin."

Then again, "what if the *Hypacrosaurus* had simply not wanted to be moved again?" The book is full of such unanswerable questions, which, along with page-turning reportage and insightful speculation, gives it wings.

Freelancer Max Alexander is based in Maine.

Reading Pictures

Alberto Manguel

Random House, $29.95

A CULTURAL CRITIC ONCE NOTED the bobbing heads of people moving through an art museum, reading labels first and then gazing up at the pictures. Imagine a museum wall stripped of text; without information, we'd be lost.

But, as a painter, I dare to think we might enjoy the pictures more, and even see them more clearly, without the documentation. The author of

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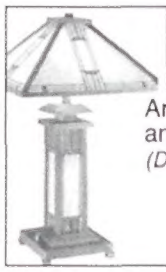

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Reading Pictures, Alberto Manguel, takes the opposite approach, offering a collection of essays so full of interesting information about pictures that the paintings themselves seem to pale in the light of his ruminations.

Manguel has won widespread acclaim for his previous books, especially *A History of Reading*. His new work is a no less splendid meander through his fascinating mind. In contemplating an abstract painting by Joan Mitchell, an artist of the generation following Jackson Pollock, Manguel leads a reader on a merry chase through the worlds of art history, literature, cultural anthropology and philosophy. In the space of five pages one encounters Cézanne, Pollock, T. S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Willem de Kooning, Franz Kline, Giacometti, Samuel Beckett, the Tarahumara Indians and William James.

Manguel argues that the more stories, ideas, facts, memories and other associations a picture suggests to the viewer, the richer one's "reading," or understanding, of the picture. A work of art, he argues persuasively, should be the starting point for intellectual embellishment. Take, for instance, his riffs on the 16th-century artist Lavinia Fontana, who painted the portrait of a disfigured girl, an unfortunate labeled a "monster" by her society, or Marianna Gartner, who focused on circus freaks in the 20th century. Although the images are disturbing, the works are indisputably thought provoking. Manguel looks at Gartner's outcasts, and vaults, by leaps of intellectual bravado, to meditations on Karl Marx and Saint Augustine. And that's just for starters.

This is a book for readers who enjoy virtuoso performances, and who like to see around, behind, to the sides, and perhaps even through works of art. What you won't find here is the magic that makes great art inspiring beyond words.

Paul Trachtman is a writer in New Mexico.

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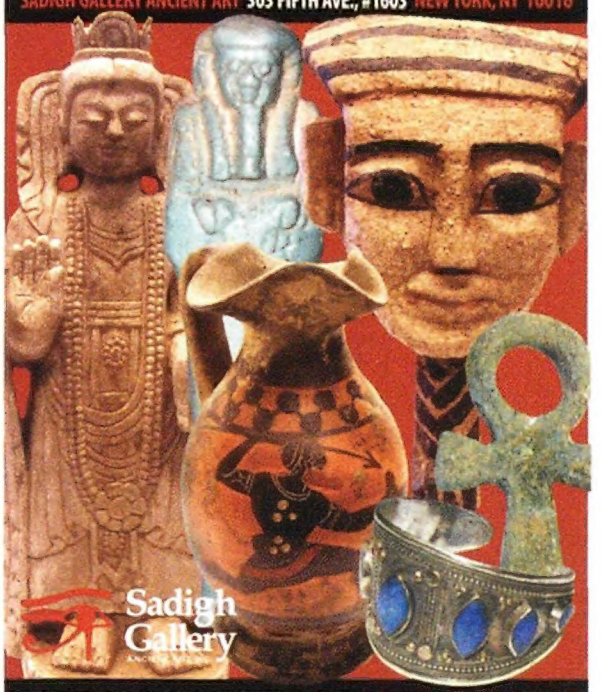

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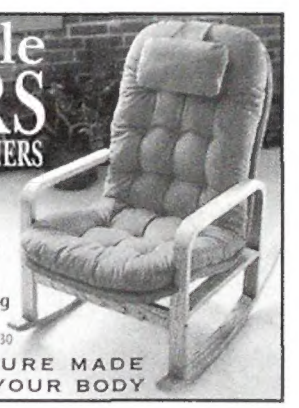

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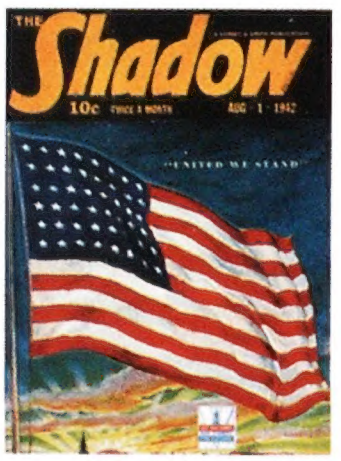

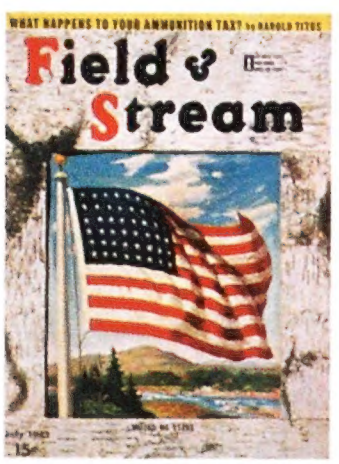

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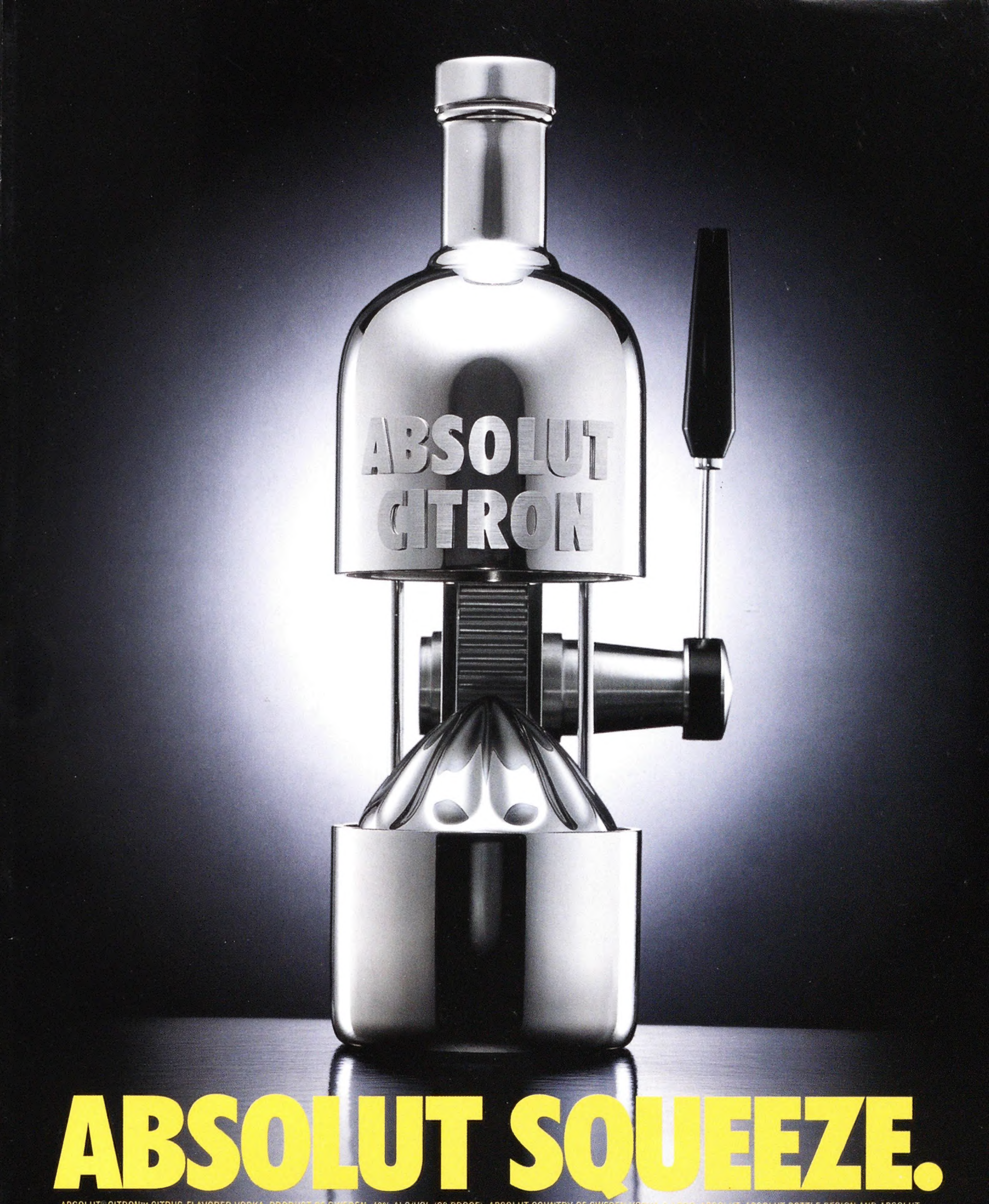

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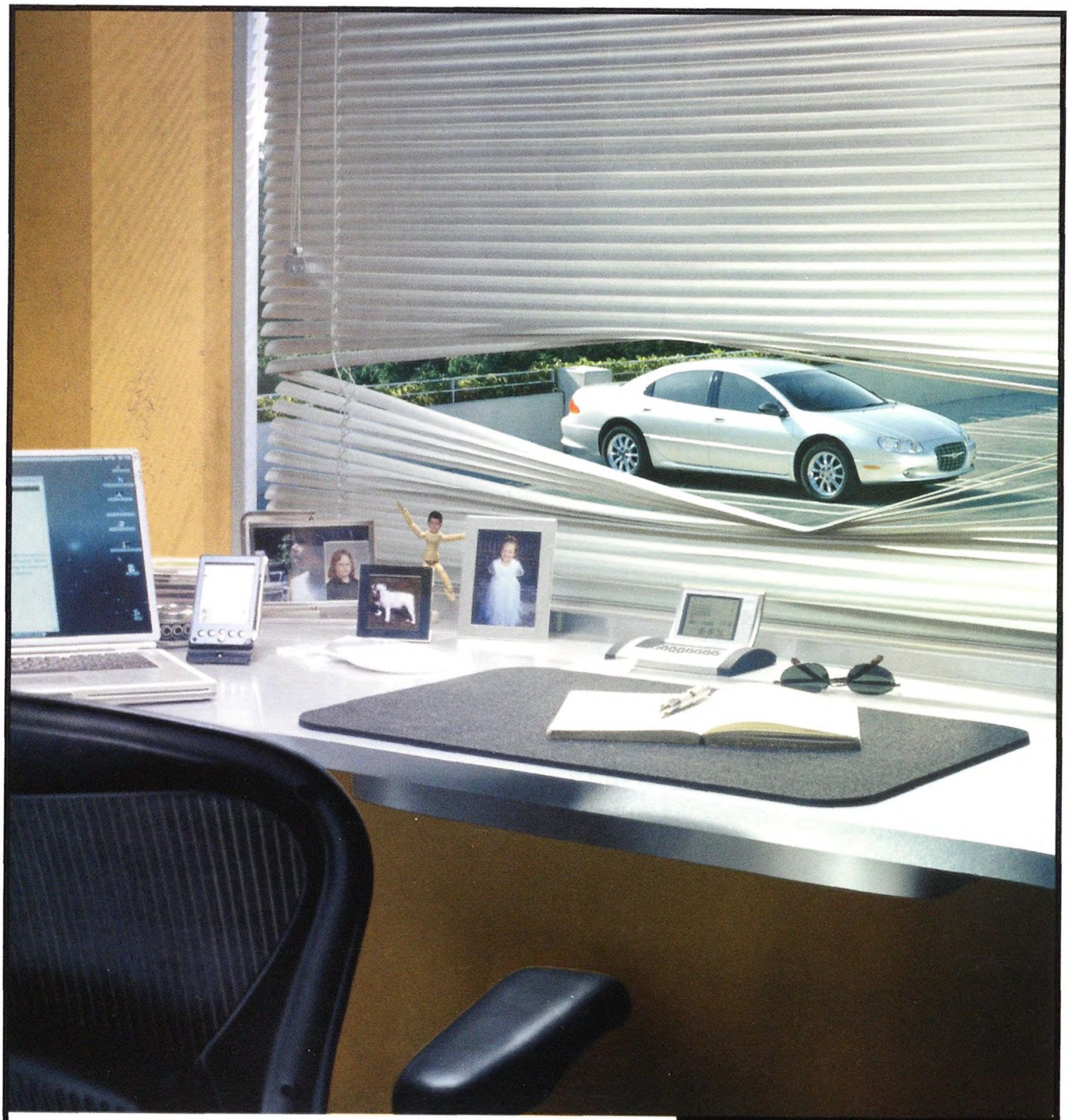

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